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Editor

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The establishment of Culture Studies programmes and linked with them the study of the transfer and transformation of cultural issues, the growing demand for translations in recent years along with a slight rectification of the imbalance of traffic, that is translation not from one language into several languages but from several languages into several languages or even from several languages into that one language, have resulted in the emergence of new areas of investigations within the domain of Translation Studies. There is a growing concern to reconstruct the archaeology of translation activities in cultures where Translation Studies had remained peripheral and where large theoretical bases were unexplored. The diversity in approaches to translation, in its processes, effects and functions, is foregrounded even in small pieces of reconstructed histories of translation. On the other hand, there is also an expressed need for entering into a dialogue with histories of translations and translation related studies in other cultures on the part of cultures which had been engaged in such studies, formally or informally, for a very long period. This need is linked with the realization of one of the important goals of translation studies which is to bring a critical understanding to the nature of cross-cultural transactions and the concomitant interlinking of knowledge bases and structures of feelings, allowing one to envision possible ethical encounters or a shared conceptual space of understanding.

Literary history is in many ways a history of translational transactions. Translations are framed by existing norms and systems and at the same time they serve to destabilise the given system and contribute to the

creation of new forms and frameworks. This happens on various different levels, that of language, of forms and structures and eventually contribute to changes in literary sensibility as such. Yet this particular aspect does not usually receive much attention in histories of literatures. Separate chapters enlisting translations appear, but seldom do we have a close analysis of translations and translation archives in relation to changes or paradigm shifts in literary history. That leads us to questions related to methods of constructing narratives of history for as EV Ramakrishnan argues in his paper it is only a selective view of history and culture that is foregrounded in such narratives leaving out the micro-histories, and I would say transnational perspectives, embedded in translations. The grand narratives embody a transcendental culture of sameness, not allowing the visibility or the surfacing of diversity. Moreover, such narratives appear to chart out trajectories that follow natural laws of selection and combination often within small local systems. A dialogical model of literary history is possible by taking into account translations, rewritings and adaptations at various levels, writes Ramakrishnan. Both TS Satyanath's and EV Ramakrishnan's papers argue for a reconsideration of micro-histories that include translation and the role of intermediate agencies in bringing about changes in sensibilities in the Indian context in the pre-modern period. Satyanath's paper also calls for the setting up of different types of archives to understand processes of cultural shifts at the "interface zone of colonial modernity, national cultural sphere and regional identities" (57). He brings an example from the world of theatre to demonstrate the layered existence of various modes of translation practices within the local interconnected communities of cultures that were not taken into account as print-culture gradually took over. It is imperative to take note of translational activities during this period, when earlier modes of translation were being supplanted by translation emerging within print culture, having an overwhelming impact and contributing to the formation of a modernity fraught simultaneously with tensions, struggles and jubilations, revolt and complicity, blindness and clarity.

The two essays discussed above focus on the Indian context, calling for an engagement that would uncover pluralist epistemologies at work in the domain of culture for a long period of time and that

would also throw light on the faultlines underlying cultural edifices that worked to promote an exclusivist point of view. There is a third essay by Dheeman Bhattacharya who looks at the contemporary situation of the translator and his role as intermediary. The task of the translator, from his time and place, is to bring in a critical awareness, a call for resistance to oppressive structures and yet he is also aware of the fact that the translator works within market forces, leading again to a context of struggle and the working out of strategies.

From a more general perspective Eugene Foyang, famed for his *"Borrowed Plumage": Polemical Essays on Translation*, demythicises seven commonly held assumptions in Translation Studies. The myths that he undoes quite often relate to the secondary role of translation in a given system, and he establishes the act of translation on a more democratic platform privileging the common translator who may not be a creative writer. He also takes Translation Studies outside the terrain of the binaries that continue to demarcate its boundaries and to move towards a common zone of understanding and reflection. His arguments are important also because they underscore the complex nature of translation activity in any given context and the colonial context is no exception. His statement that "in the dynamic between coloniser and colonised, translation becomes a dialectic, not a transitive instrument, an interactive, not a monolithic process" (34), has been proved repeatedly in the history of translation and we can add to his examples. In Bengal, when in 1850 Drinkwater Bethune, a noted educationist, along with several British and Indian scholars established the Vernacular Literature Committee, that later came to be known in Bangla as Bangabhasanubadak samaj or the Society for Bangla translation, the goal was to translate books that would be beneficial to Bengal and that the Bengalees themselves would want to read. The agenda came up in the preface to *Lord Clive* (1952), the first book that was translated, where the translator Harachandra Dutta wrote that "the object of the association is distinctly stated to be, not only to *translate* but to *adapt* English authors into Bengali." The word 'adapt' signified a dual project, giving space to both the receiver and the received, but evidently also underscoring the fact that a large project was underway to make room for English texts and English texts alone, in the literary sphere

of Bangla. *Robinson Crusoe*, Bacon's essays, Abercrombie's writings, essays from *Penny Magazine*, life of Peter the Great and life of Columbus, were in the first list of books that were to be translated. However not many of them got translated, and instead one saw *Brihatkatha*, *Paul et Virginie*, *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*, emerging from the society. Each of them contributed to the forging of a pliable language that would lead to the emergence of a vibrant literature in future. The Society was short-lived, but several Bengali scholars worked relentlessly to serve the needs of literature and language within the society. The texts from the Society also had many colour prints. *Robinson Crusoe* for instance, had twelve such prints. Readers were not just reading the text, taking in the content, but were experiencing the text, its material substance, the accompanying pictures that were a blend of different cultures and then the language in its tone and texture, sometimes its proximity to the world of the oral. Binaries of the native and the foreign were dissolved in the transformed layers even as colonialist goals were thwarted as translations resulted in dialectical processes in the field of creative literature.

It is important to note the fact, even in the example cited, that translation into Bangla resulted in a space of dialogue between creative works from several cultures, a space of reconnecting. In the case of English and its interaction with literatures from distant spaces, certain, functional goals received prominence. Texts that were translated from the Indian repertoire for instance, including religious texts and manuscripts, with rare exceptions, served largely political ends. Having made this point, I would still like to go along with Eoyang's primary contention, that it is quite impossible to have absolute statements, in other words, myths, pertaining to as complex an activity as translation, linked in various ways with various cultural institutions and individual preferences. Where can we situate for instance, the Hungarian scholar and translator Kőrösi Csoma Sándor, known in the Western world as Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, who translated *Mahavyutpatti*, the dictionary composed of thousands of Sanskrit and Tibetan terms, into English, working for months at a stretch in a remote monastery with tea and boiled rice as his sole diet? He had set out to trace the origin of the Magyar ethnic group and became involved with Tibetan language, literature and

Buddhism. Greatly respected in the field of Tibetan studies, he was later declared a Bodhisattva in Japan.

Probal Dasgupta takes up the thread of discussion related to translations of works in languages outside the global public space that is taken up, to a large extent, by English. His point of departure is the translation of children's literature into Bangla through Esperanto as a bridge language. He makes a close study of translation manoeuvres through Esperanto to show how they lead to self-distancing moves away from nationalist cultural repertoires. The translated text that he takes up leads to articulations of a post-national imaginary that can be designed into a possible pedagogy capable of allowing the child to cultivate her mother-tongue and to remain free of "chauvinistic possessiveness" and "exclusive loyalties", in short, allow her both grounding and unhoming, "to grow to a planetary citizen".

Swagata Bhattacharya too calls for contextual effects by valorizing experimentation with language, a process that introduces polyvalences by playing with the 'standardized' use of English and Bangla. She looks at the limitations of standardized English as vehicle for translating post-colonial texts and of Bangla for registering realities from tribal contexts, and suggests that it is only by going out and subverting norms that the tension between content and form may be dissolved.

A close study of translations also appears in Sucheta Bhattacharya's essay where she engages with the phenomenon of silent spaces evoked by words. Silence as she conceives it, is not that which is not articulated, but the excess surrounding words, the evocative in all its plenitude. These are spaces that she analyses to be more culture-specific and hence require other modes of transfer, the cinematic for instance. And yet as Bhattacharya points out, one cannot arrive at any general rule, for as she demonstrates again, the intersemiotic mode of transfer may be successful in one case, but not in another.

This brings us to Sourav Kargupta's essay that takes up Derrida's writings on translation demonstrative of the operation of deconstruction. Kargupta suggests replacing the word "language" with "literature" in speaking about the double bind posited at the very beginning of

Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other*, that one only speaks one language, feels "at home in one particular tongue" (100) and that one never speaks only one language. It may be pertinent to remember Emily Apter's comment on Derrida's concept of aporia that locates an always-prior other in monolingual diction, dislodging the connect between language name and nation. Elsewhere in trying to locate the "who" and the "what" of translation in Derrida's writings, Kargupta also points to the abolishment of the notion of the host and the guest and again we are reminded of Apter's statement, "Abolishing the divides of inside/outside, guest/host, owner/tenant, 'the monolingualism of the other' names a comparatism that neighbours languages, nations, literatures and communities of speakers".² Apter's conclusion is that it is in problems of translation that one encounters the way language thinks itself and it is there that we have the possibilities of a new Comparative Literature. Kargupta's essay points towards a similar direction.

Comparative Literature's interface with the shifting paradigms of Translation Studies today offers a vibrant and multilayered site that has the potential to lead to new imaginaries of cross-cultural relations based on crucial contemporary needs.

Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta

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Probal Dasgupta

**TRANSLATING FICTION FOR CHILDREN:
PEDAGOGY AND THE POST-NATIONAL IMAGINARY**

'Dedicated to Umberto Broccatelli (5.3.1931 - 11.2.2010), who translated Vamba's novel from Italian into Esperanto.'

The premise for our inquiry is that the core nationalist assumptions that once determined the place of pedagogy and children's literature in the public space of modern nations are now giving way to a post-national imaginary, and that certain major sites for this rearticulation are usefully viewed in translation-theoretic terms and in connection with Esperanto as a tool that makes translators self-conscious about these substantive issues. To the extent that awareness of issues of intercultural substance supplements and modifies the earlier view of translation as a purely formal task, and to the extent that the post-national imaginary self-consciously undoes the work of colonialism, we enter a substantivist space — thus moving away from the formalist focus of older characterizations of translation.

Translation and Children's Books

Under the nation-focused assumptions that have driven modernity, the construction of a modern childhood becomes a joint venture in which school-focused institutional pedagogy and an emerging child-friendly segment of the entertainment industry work together. In that dispensation, translation keeps the children's book industry of each nation in touch with international trends and genres in the construction of childhood.

But the forces of postcoloniality and globalization have unsettled this arrangement. The core nationalist assumptions that once determined the place of pedagogy and children's literature in the public space of

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modern nations are now giving way to a post-national imaginary. Certain major sites for this rearticulation are best viewed in a perspective provided by translation studies. Specifically the translation of children's fiction is a useful site for such inquiry.

At a time when theorizing has to deal with the novelty of the post-national imaginary and to resituate the translation of children's books in such a context, it is of interest to consider the contribution that Esperanto as a bridge language makes to literary translation. In this intervention we shall specifically argue that the use of Esperanto as a tool makes translators self-conscious about the substantive issues that arise in a post-national context. We find that, when translators use Esperanto as a bridge language, awareness of issues of intercultural substance supplements, without entirely replacing, the robust view of translation as a formal task. One question of interest is to what extent this process undoes the work of yesterday's colonial and hegemonic projects as we enter a substantivist space. For students of comparative literature, a related question is to what extent this project is cognate to that of resisting the monoliterary imagination.

As often occurs in translation studies, the example we choose to focus on brings to the fore precisely such concerns -- more effectively than any a priori systematic theorizing could have. In particular, the Italian children's novel *Il giornalino di Gian Burrasca* by Vamba (the pen name of the Luigi Bertelli) -- translated, via Umberto Broccattelli's Esperanto rendering, into Bangla by Malasree Dasgupta, as part of a European Commission project that uses the translation of children's books to promote cross-cultural contact -- is entering the book market in Bangla at a pivotal moment. The rise in the literacy levels of subaltern children over the last few decades has meant that middle class pictures of a happy childhood once prominent in the nationalist agenda have given way to a new, exploratory attitude to childhoods. In early twentieth century Italy, Vamba had very different reasons for problematizing the narrative of a middle class childhood; he made his child narrator defamiliarize the normalizing conventions of children's books. That Vamba's work, translated into Bangla as *Jhorxo Jeaker Diary* 'Stormy Jack's Diary', is hitting the market now fits right into the transformation of the imaginary in Bangla fiction towards the post-national condition.

Substantivism and a Post-National Pedagogy

How do the circumstances and content of this translation resonate with the theory that we bring to bear on it? When the substantivist research programme was launched — in a translation-theoretic context, as it happens — the main goal was to put in place the ideal-type of a “non-converting translator”, a “missionless worker [who] is not trying to convert the heathens to some true [religious or developmentalist] faith by forcing the forms of their language into the ideally determinate text of some already valorized Word” (1989; 40). Do this theory and our new empirical material even begin to fit?

Many of us are willing to assume without argument that importing Hollywood-backed wares into India counts as a neo-colonial continuation of the colonial ethos and its nationalist contestation. At the very least, that suspicion does not attach to sponsorship by a European Commission project that explores other spaces. The highlighting, through translation, of an alternative take on childhood in — well, not quite uncharted territory, but at least not canonically charted territory — opens up the tangible possibility of a mode of translation that does not immediately get hijacked by a hieratic or foundationist mission in the sense of Dasgupta (in press). For one is dealing, in this translation, with an Italy that was never placed on our canonical map either by Hollywood or by India’s British-filtered mainstream translation industry. Novelty on this scale makes it possible to move away from the gravitational fields of the standard ideological apparatuses.

Vamba’s novel critically explores the slippage between the formally valid pedagogy constitutive of the national discourse of his Italy and the really existing pedagogic systems entrenched at school and at home. The mockery that is used to effect this critical exploration works closely with the literary archive available to readers in Vamba’s constituency. For a post-missionary translator, the challenge is to rework this exercise of irony without subordinating the target culture either to a classicist originary scripture or to a colonizing or developmentalist master discourse. Let us consider a concrete passage to see what this project is about.

On page 22 of the Esperanto translation there is an instance of such irony. Gian, the hero of the novel, is nine years old at the time of this diary entry that reports that he has pinched from his sister Luisa’s drawer some incriminating photographs of young men. Gian’s sisters had

written nasty captions on these photographs. On p. 22 we are given one of these funny captions: "Li saĝnas la Maljuna Silva Stendere! Kiel li estas ridinda!" This literally says 'He looks like the Old Silva Stendere! What a joke he is!' — and calls for a footnote, since the name 'Silva Stendere' is opaque.

The footnote by the Esperanto translator tells us that in Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Ernani* there is a verse — sung in a baritone voice — that begins with the words *Il vecchio Silva stendere osa su lei la mano*, which literally means 'The old Silva to-stretch-out dares on-to her the hand'. This literal gloss is opaque for uninitiated English readers. The literal translation provided by Broccatelli, 'La maljuna Silva etendi kuragas sur sin la manon' does not conform to normal Esperanto structure either. But it reaches the reader — partly for reasons having to do with the design of Esperanto and partly because all users of this international bridge language work within an ethical and cognitive framework of automatically adjusting to alternative horizons of interpretability. Esperanto morphology and syntax work together to make it possible to mimic a variety of linguistic structures if need be while retaining an autonomous set of defaults. This arrangement provides Anusaaraka-type access to the Italian passage at a level that English or Bangla cannot match. If we were to render the sentence into even rudimentary understandable English, we would have to realign the sentence and say something like 'The old Silva dares to stretch out his hand and touch her'.

Recall that the passage is sung in a baritone voice in the Verdi opera. Now the verb *stendere*, right after *Silva*, gets facetiously reinterpreted by children and other uncaring listeners as if it was part of the name Silva. This name, 'Silva Stendere', is a multiple play on words. In some regions of Italy, the expression *siamo allo stendere* means 'We are stretching ourselves to the limit, we have nearly reached the breaking point' in the context of critical or terminal illness. Resonance with that local fact works with the author's intentions and the baritone voice to produce a richly nuanced vehicle for targeting weak, ineffectual, fragile men who dare to reach out for a women far too good for them.

How does one render this in Bangla in a children's book where too much subtlety would be misplaced?

The translator's solution is to write *Beartho hok jiboner jay*. The basis for an ironic relation with the textual corpus showcased by the nation comes in this instance from the last song Tagore wrote, *He nutan*, which includes the verse *Beakto hok jiboner jay*, 'May the triumph of life be manifested'. As domesticated by children making fun of the verse, this passage turns into the mocking version used in this translation, *Beartho hok jiboner jay*, 'May the triumph of life collapse'.

The discussion so far does not depart from the framework of formalist discussion in translation studies. The issues in such a context are long familiar and will not be rehearsed here. What is supposed to be substantivist about the move made here?

Substantivism, which may be usefully summarized as 'an unabridged take on culture', comes into its own on the paradigmatic axis. It is in the nature of cultural abridgement that it confines inquiry to one cultural space and to frown on cross-space conversations. Correspondingly, the resistance to abridgement must promote precisely conversations across spaces and subspaces. It follows that the specific manoeuvres characteristic of substantivism do not become visible at any single point. We shall argue that the numerous instances in this Bangla translation of domestication of passages from the national classics, fashioning as they do a particular reception of the domestication of the Italian nationalist literary archive in Vamba's original, invite the child to celebrate not so much the national tradition itself as the child's distance from it. The modes of domestication, beginning with this ironic instance, mark this distancing.

A pedagogy that celebrates the child's capacity for self-distancing from what pompous adults wish to inflict is potentially post-nationalist. That potential was present in Vamba's text as well. In the post-national moment of reception of this text in Bangla, the potential comes into its own. Esperanto as a bridge language self-conscious about unabridged bridgework enables this flowering.

Let us juxtapose our first exhibit with other instances to make the paradigmatic axis visible.

Contexts of Domestication

The next passage to visit is on p. 28 of Broccatelli's Esperanto version, where young women at a party, after a long wait, fall over each

other to usher in the male guests. *Miaj fratinoj rapidis por prezenti la akceptohonorajn* literally says 'My sisters rushed to give them the reception honours', by which the translator means that they rushed to welcome them. It is a poignant passage: the women discover that most of the men will not come, because Stormy Gian has gone around showing every eligible man the catty comments his sisters had written on their photographs. The Bangla translation renders Gian's name as *Jeak*; this appeal to the fact that the English name 'Jack' is familiar in Bengal could have been avoided, but a direct transliteration of Gian as *Jaan* would amount to needless exoticism — and would miss the point; this is a children's book, not an academic exercise in the ethnography of early twentieth century Italy. In this article, we use the form *Gian* to make the point that we, in this academic exercise, are writing with two perspectives in mind; this article is not part of a children's novel; our generic conventions are different.

To return to the women falling over each other to welcome the new arrivals — our translator has chosen this as a moment to project the child's alternative domestication of the classics. Tagore's poem *Bondi bir* 'The captive hero', in this collection *Kathau o Kaahini* 'Legends and tales', includes the passage *Porxi gealo kaarxaakaarxi, / aage ke baa praan koribek daan taari laagi taarxaataarxi*, 'They fell over each other, each of them was in a tearing hurry to sacrifice his life first.' In this passage in the translation of Vamba, our translator writes *aage ke baa kaare koribe baron porxe gealo kaarxaakaarxi*, 'Each of them was in a tearing hurry to welcome them first'. The Esperanto bridge rendering does not indicate that the Italian original echoes anything in the classics at this point — but there are other places in the bridge text for which the Bangla rendering has no appropriation of the nationalist textual corpus to offer. It is a standard move in the translation of an extensive text to redistribute the location of salient rhetorical devices in this fashion; formalist treatments of the problem abound and need no repetition here. What we are focusing on is the specifics of the appropriation of the nationalist classics.

In the present passage the Bangla translation domesticates the Tagore passage in the service of a bathetic effect. The women's efforts are about to look ridiculous : the men they are hoping to usher in turn

out to be bearers of regret letters from the eligible bachelors. How the adult reader responds to such a passage is not our main concern — though a substantivist take will in the long run need to bear in mind the filtering effect of eavesdropping adult readers who steer the pedagogy along with the teachers of the young and their colleagues in publication and other child-friendly media. Our first focus is nonetheless on the child reader's perception — as we ideal-typically visualize it in this theoretical exercise.

Our position is that the child reader of this Bangla translation will identify with the diary-writing boy Stormy Gian who finds his elder sisters' young-adult antics risible, who knows his children's classics from the nationalist pedagogy, and who mockingly bends the verses of these classics to express his delight in his sisters' discomfiture. By identifying with Stormy Gian, the child reader of this Bangla version buys into such an appropriation of the classics for the purposes of irony targeting the systems of regimentation and mobilization.

We take you now to a passage on p. 36 of the bridge rendering. Stormy Gian apostrophizes his diary, saying, *vi min sekvis ciam, kiel fidela kamarado, tra tiom da malgojoj, tiom da aventuroj kaj tiom da danĝeroj*. 'You have always followed me, as a faithful comrade, through so many sorrows, so many adventures and so many dangers.' The translator into Bangla, writing *aamar shub larxaaiye tumii to kaaxdhe kaaxdh rekhe aamaar shangge durgam giri kaantaarmoru periye eshecho* — 'in all my battles you have given me company, shoulder to shoulder, and crossed with me the perilous mountains, valleys and deserts' — is echoing nationalist poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's song that begins with the words *Durgam giri kaantaar moru dustar paaraabaar/longghite habe raatri nishithe, jaatiraa luxhiyuar*, 'Perilous mountains, valleys and deserts, uncrossable oceans / we must cross all this in the darkness of night, travellers, be careful.'

There is no direct mockery here; but apostrophe provides considerable latitude. A diary is after all incapable of being an actual partner for our hero in his heroic quest for adventure. Stormy Gian is imagining a companion, and to this end he hums the standard tune for a perilous, adventurous journey: Nazrul comes unbidden to his lips. That he can invoke Nazrul to apostrophize his diary companion is a gesture marking the lightness with which he treats the nationalist heroic

corpus. At the same time, at this early stage in the child's quest for an intelligible heroic destiny, we see a certain unsuperseded regard for heroism. Appropriation and its representation are not exercises of elementary copying skills. To put it differently, copying is hardly ever an elementary matter.

We continue to look at cases where the Bangla translation injects cultural local colour to make up for the omission of such colour while translating certain other passages in the original that display explicit intertextual traffic with the Italian national literary corpus. Thus, on page 46 of the Esperanto bridge rendering, the passage *jen mi rapidegis for sur la cefvojo* means 'I had hit the road and rushed off', and merely invites a spot of colour. The translator again makes the choice of injecting the specific local colour of mildly subversive child speak, and writes *aamaader jaatraa holo shuru* 'our journey began' — a quote from a song by Tagore that begins with these words. The context is yet another misdemeanour committed by Stormy Gian, who is running away to evade punishment by adults.

On p. 77 of the bridge rendering, we find the sentence *La afero restis nesolvita* 'The case remained unsolved' — this pertains to a petty misdemeanour by a child that the school authorities have not been able to get to the bottom of. Our Bangla translator has written *Tobu shabaai je timire shei timire* 'yet everybody was still as much in the dark as they had been'. This does not sound like a literary allusion, but it is; in the classic nineteenth century patriotic song *Kato kaal pare balo Bhaarot re* 'Say how long India will have to wait' there is a passage *Paro-raajo-pathe paro-dipo-maalaa/Tumi je timire tumi she timire* 'On the highway of foreign rulers you see the brilliance of lamps lighted by foreigners / You remain in the same darkness that you were immersed in before.'

Is this indeed subversive appropriation? Are we wrong to include this example — or p. 95 of the bridge rendering, where the passage *la kompatinga Joejo estas tenata senscia pri cio* 'poor Gian is kept ignorant about all this' is translated as *becaaraa Jeak je timire shei timire theke jaabe* 'poor Jack will stay as much in the dark as he had been' — in our list? Few users of the expression *je timire shei timire* are aware of its textual basis. However, technically it works with the rest of the materials on the same paradigmatic axis, and there is no

evidence compelling the exclusion of this instance. One might argue that the two analyses apply simultaneously.

On p. 78 of the bridge translation Broccatelli writes *Virgini konsentas kun patro, kaj si diris ke Maralli estas la plej bona, kion oni povas deziri* 'Virginia agrees with dad, and she says that Maralli is the best that one could possibly wish for'. Malasree Dasgupta translates this as *Amaar paraan jaahaa caae ini taai ini taai go*, 'What my heart wishes for / he is that, he is indeed that', echoing the Tagore song *Aamaar paraan jaahaa caae / tumi taai tumi taai go*, 'What my heart wishes for/you are that, you are indeed that'. Given that the sentiments are reported through the filtering voice of the young boy, the text here is ironic about the antics of young adults in love as seen by a child. In the translation, the narrating child comes across as using the Tagore echo to produce a mildly ironic effect.

On p. 108 of Broccatelli's translation we find the passage *car pro vera miraklo gi ne signis la lastan tagon de mia vivo*, 'because it was truly a miracle that [this date] did not mark the last day of my life'. The Bangla rendering chosen is : *aarekxu hole shesher she din bhayonkar hoy jaacchilo aamaar*, 'it nearly became that terrible final day for me'. Here the locution *shesher she din bhayonkar* 'that terrible final day' quotes from a nineteenth century song about death that listeners today find pompous, *Mone karo aaj shesher she din bhayonkar / Onne jabe baakko kabe / Tumi rabe niruttor* 'Think today of that terrible final day / When others speak / And you shall remain speechless'. Here we are looking not quite at subversive literary allusion, but at an instance where the old text is universally regarded as pompous. There is thus no longer a received positive opinion for anybody to subvert : the subversion has prevailed. Issues similar to the one in the case of *je timire she timire* arise, and our response is identical : no harm keeping it in the list of pertinent passages that take part in producing the effect. What is important in the context of our analyses, beyond these synchronic remarks about contemporary reception and the transformation into fixed chunks, is that the nationalist corpus has a palimpsest element to it, with archaeologically distinct layers.

We have three more instances on our list. On p. 127 of the Broccatelli version we find the passage *tiun magian vorton, kiu redonas al mi la pacon de la animo kaj sonas al mia orelo kvazaŭ dolca promeso*,

'That magical word that gives me back my peace of mind and sounds to my ear like a sweet promise'. This is spoken by a woman at the receiving end of one of Stormy Gian's benign pranks. The translator renders this as *oi shabdo je aamaar kaaner bhitor diye marome poshilo go, monpraan jurxiye gealo*, using literary material from the kirtan genre (a type of late medieval devotional song); literally the Bangla passage says 'that word comes into my heart through my ear and brings an end to all my pain'.

On p. 144 the Esperanto version has *Li levis la brakojn al la cielo, grumblis alianjn vortojn* — 'He raised his arms skywards, he said a few grumbling words' — for which the Bangla translator writes *Aakaashpaane haat baarxaalen kaahaar tare, birxbirx kore kisab bollen* 'He raised his arms towards the sky, who was it for, and he said something in a grumbling tone'. The first sentence here is directly taken from the Tagore song *Je raate mor duaarguli bhaanglo jharxe* 'The night that a storm broke all my doors down.'

Our final example is from p. 160 of the Esperanto bridge version, where Broccatelli writes *En la cambro estas nuboj* 'In the room there are clouds.' This is said as a code message exchanged by hostel boys who are planning to go to a hiding place and smoke. Our translator renders this as *Chotxo ghartxaate megher pare megh jomeche* 'In the small room there are clouds piled on clouds' — an allusion to the Tagore song that begins with *Megher pare megh jomeche* 'There are clouds piled on clouds.'

Theoretical Reflections

At the level of translation theory, we need to look with some care at where this line of reasoning leaves our take on pedagogy.

Our argument is that the task of education is to give children a planetary upbringing that includes but is not confined to the national — or, in a multilingual nation, the linguistic — starting point. For this to work, one essential requirement is that children need to learn the consequences of cultivating their mother tongue, for otherwise they will not take part in the conservation of the world's cognitive and cultural resource banks. At the same time, children need to remain free of the chauvinistic possessiveness with which this culture might claim their

exclusive loyalty if one were to accept corporate authoritarian views of the nation — the views sometimes called 'fascist'. we are avoiding this term in the interest of generality.

For a pedagogy to be planetary in this sense, it is essential to encounter foreign cultures, and children who have no opportunity to learn foreign languages up to the necessary proficiency can do this most vividly by reading foreign literature in translation. It is in this context that we are reflecting on the pedagogy that is responsible for the reception by children of translation manoeuvres in this Bangla translation of Vamba. We have discussed some of these manoeuvres at length, manoeuvres designed to make available to the Bangla speaking child the project of subversive appropriation of the national literary archive for the child to grow up as an informed citizen with the necessary minimal self-distancing from a total identification with the founding enthusiasms of the nation.

Of course issues arise about the author's intentions, as usual. We have no view on Vamba's intentions, and we submit that they are not directly relevant to our enterprise. The nation, in its core form, was based on military potential, which has since been modified so that economic competition takes the place that warfare had in earlier versions of nationalism. But translation as a human enterprise needs to beat swords into plough shares if it is to live up to the promise of the humanities. In its fuller form, which space prevents us from articulating here, substantivist translation theory makes specific moves that modify the agenda of cultural studies in order to clean up the residues of strategic and primarily competition-focused reasoning in literary inquiry. But we are beginning to exceed our brief.

We expect the detailed translation passages presented in our discussion to have made it clear to some readers that the maximally transparent and flexible design of Esperanto as a language makes it a translation tool that advances the cause of resisting all opacities. It pays to notice that chauvinism is an extreme case of deliberately designed opacity, and that therefore the larger enterprise of overcoming opacity is also one of going beyond the nation-hugging theoretical moves that many of our colleagues in the humanities have permitted to lapse into a default. We must of course celebrate the accession to nation status of many ethnicities that had been denied this right up to the twentieth

century. However, now that we are all on board, it is possible to begin to relativize this nation to the higher agenda of human rights.

The pursuit of that agenda begins in the mind of the child who is enabled by a post-national pedagogy to grow into her full rights as a planetary citizen. The point of this paper was to show the inter local, negotiated character of the process that initiates children into the ways of this cultural adventure — keeping faith with what we have learnt in the past from our best thinkers. That Esperanto is a negotiated language has something to do with the clarity and focus of its design.

To be sure, the substantivist take cannot and does not confine itself to language alone. The design of Esperanto has to do not only with features of the linguistic tool, but with the movement of double resistance in the pedagogy that users of Esperanto have been fashioning as their cultural USP. The first resistance is to hegemonic languages — at that moment, Esperantism affirms the primary value of each ethnic culture, in its national or subnational political form if it has achieved that status; in the case of English, the first moment involves celebrating non-metropolitan Englishes (in and outside the 'metropolitan nations', Britain and the United States, whose national apparatus begins at home by suppressing or marginalizing the celebration and entitlements of intra-national diversity). But the second moment of Esperantism de-affirms this celebration of the ethnic, deflating its pomposity, encouraging contact with the outside world, valorizing horizontal translation as a constitutive value for a duly colourful childhood.

To put it more empirically: adults who become proficient readers in Esperanto know that to make complete, unabridged sense of the language they have to come to terms with its literary corpus. Among the salient documents in this corpus are major translations done by such giants as Zamenhof, Grabowski, Kalocsay, Auld, Waringhien, Nervi, who are also celebrated for their original poetry. To read Esperanto is not just to read originals and translations on the same footing, but to dip into the most globally-equitable translation basket known to us — among languages into which so much literature has been translated (this result is from unpublished research by Abel Montagut).

At the level of children brought up in families where Esperanto is used, childhood has meant exposure to children from other cultures as part of the core values one is being encouraged to cherish — not just

to children of some other skin colour, but to children who have a different culture attached that they do not leave at the door when they interact with you. In such families, children are brought up reading children's books from many cultures and valuing childhoods outside the mainstream which too they are encouraged to take seriously. These facts, little documented and frequently ignored, have to do with the role of Esperanto as a site where adults and children together have been pioneering the construction of a seriously post national childhood that does not lapse into a one-language, one-new-world-culture hegemony. This needs to be said as the popular misrepresentation of Esperanto as an artificial global unification monster is precisely the opposite of what the most rigorously Esperantism-cherishing families have been rooting for.

A translator who is using the bridge language Esperanto as part of the toolkit making an Italian to Bangla translation possible — in the absence of translators who not only know both Italian and Bangla but furthermore are able to take special care to serve the interests of children — is drawing not just on the resources that the language design of Esperanto provide, not just on the helpful network of Esperantists who can and do answer queries quickly, but on the diversity-promoting, translation-cherishing ethos that comes attached with these resources. Families that use Esperanto at home and bring their children up speaking it as one of the home languages are only a particularly informative special case of this post-national cultural ethos.

One important question is what those wedded to cultural studies programmes dependent on the 'English as a globalizer' paradigm propose to come up with at the level of responding to this alternative. In the context of comparative literature, perhaps the question should be not about possible responses, but about what the ... *reception* is going to look like. To use that word, however, is really to stray very far from our brief.

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SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT TRANSLATION : OR, HOW READERS MISREAD TRANSLATORS

In the vast literature on translation, both practical and theoretical, that has been published in the last thirty years, there are seven persistent assumptions, which I characterize as "myths", that are almost always unquestioningly accepted as true. These are :

- (1) a translator must know well both the target and the source language;
 - (2) a translation can never equal the original; it is always inferior;
 - (3) only a poet can translate poetry;
 - (4) a translation must read like a translation;
 - (5) all native languages are national languages;
 - (6) the translator is invisible;
 - (7) the colonizing culture is always hegemonic.
- I wish to refute, or at least to challenge, all seven assertions.

1. Proficiency in both target and source languages

Does one really need to be proficient in a language before one can translate? It would appear that full command of both source and target language would be a prime desideratum for a translator. Yet, two of the most prolific translators of Chinese poetry, Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley, did not have a complete command of Chinese. In Pound's case, he was almost totally ignorant of Chinese when he composed *Cathay* in 1915, relying almost exclusively on the notes of Professors Arita and Morita. Yet he composed some of the best versions of Chinese poetry ever written, including the famous "The River Merchant's Wife: a Letter," his version of Li Bai's (李白) *Changgan xing* 長干行. When Pound published his translations of the *Shijing* 詩經 in 1959, he was

under the tutelage of the Korean sinologue at Harvard, Achilles Fang, but he was far from having mastered written and spoken Chinese. In the case of Waley, he was able to read Chinese, but there is no sign he was ever able to speak it fluently. He never visited China, indeed, he declined the invitation to visit when it was extended to him late in his life on the pretext that the China he was interested in no longer existed in the People's Republic of China. A more cogent reason for his refusal to visit China was that he could not speak Chinese.¹

A more spectacular case, familiar to every Chinese, is Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924) who translated over 170 works from English and French, despite the fact that he knew no foreign language. Here is Lin's personal account of how he translated:²

I have no foreign languages. I cannot pass for a translator without the aid of several gentlemen, who interpret the texts for me. They interpret, and I write down what they interpret. They stop, and I put down my pen. 6,000 words can be produced after a mere four hours' labour. I am most fortunate to have my error-plague, rough translations kindly accepted by the learned.

(余不通西文，其勉強從事于譯界者，倚二三書子，為余口譯其詞，余耳受而手書之，聲由筆出，日僅四小時，得文字六千言，其間辭語皆出，乃華商之口，不覺其拙劣而敢之，此予之大幸也。)³

The status of Lin Shu is not merely as a translator; he is regarded in China as one of the most accomplished authors of the late Qing period.

2. Translations are always inferior to the original

Since the translation of literary works are acknowledged to be extremely difficult, it is generally assumed that a translation can never be equal to, much less superior to, the original. This is true in a preponderant majority of cases, but there are exceptions. The aforementioned Lin Shu was deemed by Arthur Waley, a stalwart Englishman familiar with the classics in both Chinese and English, to be superior to Dickens. Casting Dickens into the terse medium of classical Chinese enabled Lin Shu to avoid the purple passages of overblown rhetoric that sometimes mars Dickens's narration. Waley put it this way:

... I have compared a number of passages with the original. To put Dickens into classical Chinese would on the face of it seem to be a grotesque undertaking. But the results are not grotesque. Dickens inevitably becomes a different and to my mind a better writer. All of the overelaboration, the overstatement and uncurbed garrulity disappear. The humor is there, but is transmitted by a precise, economical style; every point that Dickens spoils by uncontrolled exuberance, Lin Shu makes quietly and efficiently (BP, p. 111) ⁴.

The Chinese scholar-critic Zheng Zhenduo (Cheng Chen-tuo) did not insist on Lin Shu being superior to Dickens, but he did maintain that Lin Shu's Chinese version was every bit the equal of Dickens's English original:

If one reads the original in one sitting, and then reads the translation, the feeling of the author is retained without the slightest change; sometimes even the humor, which is most difficult to achieve, is nevertheless captured in Lin's translations. Sometimes even clever phrasing are maintained in his translations (BP, p. 114).

In the case of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the author has proclaimed publicly and in print that Gregory Rabassa's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in English is better than his own original *Cien años de soledad* in Spanish.⁵ In his essay, "Basilisk's Eggs," Alastair Reid has written: "the English translation ... is something of a masterpiece, for it is almost matched to the tune of the Spanish, never lengthening or shortening sentences but following them measure for measure. Garcia Marquez insists that he prefers the English translation to the original, which is tantamount to saying they are interchangeable -- the near-unattainable point of arrival for any translator."⁶

3. It takes a poet to translate a poet

This seemingly unassailable assertion suffers from what I call a generic tautology. What it's really saying is that a poem in the original should be a poem in the translation. Few would argue with that formulation. But taken rigorously, the statement "It takes a poet to translate a poet" is vulnerable to several semantic challenges. First, it assumes that the mantle of a poet is unarguable, the way, say, being a policeman is unarguable. However, in the case of poets, nothing is *more*

arguable. Not everyone agrees on who is and who is not a poet. Further more, even with universally acknowledged poets, from Shakespeare to those less accomplished, not every effort made by a "poet" results in poetry. The writing of poetry is a creative enterprise; the translating of poetry is a re-creating effort. The translator who tries to capture the poetry in the original may be, at that instant, a poet, but she may not necessarily write poetry herself. Yes, Dryden and Pope translated Homer, and being a poet doubtless helped them, but there are many unsung translators who have rendered poetry creditably. I think of James J. Y. Liu, an eminent scholar of Chinese literature, whose rendering of Chinese poems, in *The Art of Chinese Poetry* and other works, capture much of the original, even though no one would claim that he was a poet.

On the other hand, there are more than a few translations by poets which miss the poetry in the original altogether. Amy Lowell, a poet, in collaboration with Florence Ayscough, tried her hand at Du Fu (Tu Fu) in *Fir-Flower Tablets*, and the result are far from poetic. Pound may have produced some of the best translations of Chinese poetry to be found, but he also produced some execrable versions which are bad poems as well as bad translations. In other words, being a poet does not guarantee a successful poetic rendering of a poem, nor does not being a poet preclude the successful translation of a poem.

4. A translation must read like a translation

There are empirical and definitional problems with this formulation. Some insist that readers should expect translations to read like translations. Indeed, if so, it is not always clear what a translation should sound like. Bookstores do not have sections labeled "translations", and non-specialist readers do not routinely look to read translations.

A second argument against this formulations is that the experience of the reader in the source language is with a translation, i.e., a text with "foreignizing" characteristics; why should a reader in the target language have an experience any different? (This is not to argue that all that might be strange to a target audience should be erased.) The "foreign" elements in a translation may be evident in its content and its style, but there is no need to convey the foreignness of a work lexically or textually.

One might also ask if anyone would be attracted to reading of translations. Would anyone prefer reading translation to reading original works? Mere linguistic chauvinism would impel most audiences to avoid translations if they were so labeled, especially if they are unable to read the translation as fluently as the original. In fact, requiring that translations read like translations undermines the very subversive purpose of translations, which is to inculcate a perspective to a nativist insularity. It would not help to repel audiences and readerships by making the exposure to foreign experiences more forbidding than they already are.

Finally, one might ask if readers have any notion of how a translation should read except in so far as it departs from the original. The advice that a translation must read like a translation makes sense only for those who are conversant in both languages, for only they would be able to compare the translation to the original. (Cf Vladimir Nabokov's *Eugene Onegin*, which is virtually unreadable for anyone not conversant with Russian.) The monolingual reader in the target language can detect a translation only in negative terms: that the translation is not as fluent as a natively produced work, or that it is hard to understand on purely linguistic grounds. Indeed, to insist that a translation must read like a translation means that the only way for monolingual readers to identify a translation is when the translation *fails* to convey the original effectively. The original, after all, did not appear unfluent to the readers in the source language. To say that a translation must read like a translation is tantamount to requiring that a translation should always be self-revealingly incompetent. The original was, presumably, smoothly accessible to the reader in the source language; to require its translation to be anything less compromises the value of reading a translation.

5. A national language is always the native language

The problem with this formulation is that it mistakenly assumes that countries are monolingual, and it neglects the fact that the notion of "native" is extremely problematic. Too many discussions of translation assume a monolingual readership, and tend to identify a culture with one "national" language. This neglects the fact that, with the prominent exceptions of England, the United States, and Japan (two insular by virtue of geography, the third by virtue of cultural isolationism), the rest of the world is pretty much multilingual.⁶ In India, for example,

Hindi and English are the "official" languages, supplemented with over 20 languages recognized as official in different regions of the country (one source claims that over 1000 languages are spoken in India¹). In Singapore, English is used at school, and, for the majority of the population, Chinese is spoken at home. Switzerland is famously multilingual, with French, German, Italian, and Romansch spoken, as well as English. Even those who speak Chinese as a first language, at least those who live in China, can claim multilinguality, since most Chinese speak a regional dialect (language), in addition to the "national" language, *putonghua*.²

The narrow monolingual vision of national literatures and cultures overlooks two important phenomena: the existence of macaronic literature, and the multilingual character of the English language, which has adopted many expressions and locutions from other languages.

The elusiveness of the concept of "native speaker", and its contentiousness has been documented by Thomas M. Paikeday³ who challenges the general assumption (assumed by Chomsky) that native speakers are easily identified as benchmarks for proper usage in any language. Too many speakers, born and raised in a country, are liable to idiosyncratic mistakes, or speak a non-standard dialect. Every "native speaker" does not qualify as an expert and a model in the language. The assumption of "native speakers" as experts also excludes, on the basis of the vagaries of birth and upbringing, non-native speakers who may be as proficient as the ablest native speakers. "I had not appreciated", said the philosopher⁴ W. V. Quine, "how murky the notion of the native speaker is" (Paikeday, 8).

The notion, not only of "native", but of "foreign" is more problematic than most critics imagine. In the case of China, the "native" language, Chinese, was, for most of the past millennia, the "foreign" language. The presumptive distinctness between a "foreign" language and a "native" language is not always self-evident, or even true. As Judy Wakabayashi points out, in three countries — Japan, Korea, Vietnam — "Classical Chinese was domesticated in various ways and in varying degrees over time, resulting in hybrid language forms known as Sino-Korean, Sino-Japanese and Sino-Vietnamese" (25). Indeed, Wakabayashi reminds us, "translations were simply an aid to understanding the classics, not a replacement for them" (29). Eva Hung's reminder cannot be too often stressed; "The national language" (*guoyu* or *guowen*) in every non-Chinese dynasty [which is virtually half of the previous

millennia] was not Chinese, but the language of the ruler. These were not considered foreign languages" (78).

6. Translators are not invisible

It may be true that in the West, the translator has often been neglected when works written in other languages have been presented as if they were originals in English. But in Asia, translation is not an underrecognized activity. Translation has been established as a state-sponsored activity in several Asian countries. "In 1862 the Tongwen Guan government school was established in Peking for the training of interpreters and translators ... schools in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Fuzhou ... also trained people in foreign languages and translation" (Hung and Wakabayashi, 119); in Japan, although training for the Chinese and Dutch tsuji was on-the-job, rather than formalized ... the government established an institution in Tsushima ... for training interpreters of Korean"; in Korea, "Ewha Women's College nurtured young women translators"; and in Vietnam, in 1827 "a Translation Office that trained translators and interpreters was established in 1835 ... and the translation of European works was also part of the curriculum at Tonkin Academy in Hanoi (established in 1886)" (Hung and Wakabayashi, 41).

Indeed, in some instances, translators took precedence even over authors. In discussing translation in the Malay world, Doris Jedamski points to two instances: in Sou'yh's *Petir Raksia* (The Secret Thunderbolt), the "Western author is not mentioned and no reference is made to title, place, year or anything else that could help identify the source text," although the book leaves no doubt about its Western origin, and even guarantees that "copyright was still with the author" (238). In the case of *Menentang Maoet de Boedapest*, there is nothing to conceal the fact that the book is a translation: "The translator's name is given, and ... the cover illustration signals the Westernness of the text to the reader." However, the copyright is no longer the author's but the translator's; according to Jedamski, "it is 'the translator's copyright' that is 'protected'" (Hung and Wakabayashi, 238).

In Korea, in the early twentieth century, publishers tended to neglect the identity of Western authors: "details about the original author and work were generally not given, with the identities of the author and translator being regarded as less important than the content" (Hung and

Wakabayashi, 156). In this instance as with the Malay translations, but for the generic fact that he is a Westerner, it was the author who is invisible, not the translator. Indeed, contrary to the Western notion of translators being invisible, "in modern Japanese literary history translators played an important and visible role in 'modernizing' literature, and Japanese novelists read translations of Western literature for literary inspiration" (Yoshihiro Ohsawa, Hung and Wakabayashi, 142).¹⁰

We have already cited Lin Shu. The late Qing readership read Lin Shu's translations because of the translation, not because of their originals. Chinese readers were attracted to Lin Shu's superb literary style, whether the author was Charles Dickens or H. Ryder Haggard or Herbert Spencer.

7. The colonizing culture is always hegemonic

The assumption that the ruling colonial power always exercises hegemonic influence over the colonized culture, is by now, an axiom of post-colonial studies,¹¹ but the evidence, at least in Asia, contradicts this belief.

Post-colonial notions of the oppressive hegemonists do not always hold in Asia. The Dutch, for example, "ruled and later educated the Indonesian people in their own indigenous languages and in Malay" (Jedamski, 224). In the dynamic between colonizer and colonized, translation becomes a dialectic, not a transitive instrument, an interactive, not a monolithic process. As Jedamski points out, in her discussion of translation in Indonesia, "It would be naive to blame the colonizers for pursuing their colonial interests. It is, however, crucial to shed light on the very intricate process of colonization and its long-lasting effects. Translation and adaptation played a crucial role in this colonization process, but they also played as crucial a role in the decolonization process" (229). Native traditions were not erased with the advent of print, or with the proliferation of translations of Western works: "...even after the firm establishment of the print media in India, everyday practices of translation continued to escape the awareness of a fixed text — examples of uninstitutionalized, unselfconscious, unauthorized translations point to the continuation of pre-colonial traditions" (264).

Xiaomei Chen has shown that the most fervent anti-Western propaganda during the Cultural Revolution in China adopted "hegemonic" Western discourse. Chen shows that extreme chauvinism in China did not prevent her from absorbing — or co-opting — Western models and

institutions. The demonization of China during that period, reflected in countless "I-survived-the-Cultural Revolution" memoirs, fails to appreciate the tragic irony that the ideology that oppressed any tendency toward westernization was itself deeply influenced by the West. Chen's major contention, and her most surprising insight is that, "although model theatre is in many ways entirely indigenous to China [...] it is also, although much less obviously, indebted to Western traditions, depending for its success on genres, media, and techniques imported from the West" (126). She points out that the folk opera *White-Haired Girl*, on which the model theatre version was based "is a multilayered text that combines elements of the old and new cultures, the foreign and indigenous cultures, and the urban and rural cultures that prevailed until the mid-1940s" (132). These warhorses of Chinese Communist revolutionary propaganda become, in Chen's hands, the "text" for an analysis of Chinese society, in which theatre becomes politics and politics becomes theatre.

In Korea, a similarly ironic "counter-discourse" occurred. Kim Jinhee refutes "the notion that the ready acceptance of Western literary models inevitably implies the wholesale imposition of Western modes of thought, thus eradicating indigenous traditions and ultimately the cultural identity of non-Western audiences" (94). In fact, she offers a counter-cultural critique, and maintains that, at least in "Western-style Korean drama," the "allegedly devastating effects of Western models are themselves more a Western construction than a Korean reality" (94). Her analysis of Yi Man-hŭi's *Please Turn Out the Lights* suggests that "By invoking a Western style, Yi's play actually becomes more Korean" (99).¹²

Epilogue:

The myths debunked in this essay are not altogether false. Indeed, many of them are normatively true, but the danger lies in assuming what is normatively true must be universally true. Some of the myths are more true in some cultures but not others; some myths are undermined by individual exceptions. But, contrary to the aphoristic illogic that cite "exceptions that prove the rule," my contention is that these exceptions undermine the rule. Translation Studies has now matured to a point when fine discriminations can be advanced. It is time that these assumptions, often made without reflection, not go unchallenged.

NOTES :

1. Denis Sinor, the eminent scholar on Central Asia, and a friend of Waley's in his latter years, informs me that "Waley did not speak Chinese" (personal communication).
2. In the translator's preface to the Chinese translation of Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop* 老古玩店.
3. For a full discussion of the oral factor in Lin Shu's translations, see Rachel Lung, "The Oral Translator's 'Invisibility' : The Chinese Translation of *David Copperfield* by Lin Shu and Wei Yi", *TTR : traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, vol. 17 n° 2, 2004, 161-84.
4. Eugene Eoyang, *Borrowed Plumage : Polemical Essays on Translation*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2003.
5. Cf. *The Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, Volume 1, edited by Olive Classe. Chicago : Fitzroy, Dearborn Publishers, 2000, p. 814.
6. Cf. Guadalupe Valdez : "...scholars estimate that there are over 5000 distinct languages spoken in that same small number of nation states. What is evident from these figures is that few nations are either monolingual or mono-ethnic". Linguistic Society of America; cf. <http://www.lsadc.org/info/ling-fields-multi.cfm>; accessed 2009.2.3; also, François Grosjean, *Life with Two Languages*. Cambridge, Mass. 1982.
7. Maps of India : <http://india.mapsofindia.com/the-country/india-forum/indian-languages.html>; accessed 2009.2.3.
8. Chinese dialects are more mutually incomprehensible than some European languages (Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, and German), and can claim independent linguistic status.
9. *The Native Speaker is Dead!* Toronto and New York: PPI, 1985.
10. This section has been adapted from portions of my review of *Asian Translation Traditions*, edited by Eva Hung and Judy Wakabayashi, published in *Target : An International Journal on Translation Studies*, 19:2 (2007), 383-390.
11. Cf. for example : Ajanta Sen Poovaiah, "Colonisation of culture : (a) the irony of shifting levels of powerplay (b) shifting levels of powerplay make the winner a loser (c) Colonisation of culture and shifting levels of powerplay : no permanent winners here"; http://www.colorsofindia.com/_ajanta/writings/Colonisation-of-culture-3-7-94for.pdf; accessed 2009.2.26; Patrick O'Brien, "The Myth of Anglophone Succession : From British Primacy to American Hegemony" (*New Left Review*, 24 November-December 2003).
12. This section has been modified from portions of my review of *East of West : Cross-Cultural Performance and the Staging of Difference*, edited by Claire Sponsler and Xiaomei Chen, published in *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 2003, pp. 81-88.

**BEYOND CANONS AND CLASSROOMS : TOWARDS
A DIALOGIC MODEL OF LITERARY HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The distinction between 'translation' and 'translation studies' has been convincingly brought out by scholars such as James S. Holmes, Gideon Tourey (both in Lawrence Venuti, 2000) and Susan Bassnett. Translation Studies has emerged as an interdisciplinary field of research that looks beyond the process and products of translation. Socio-political issues such as cultural identity, text and ideology, institutional locations and authority, the making of literary traditions and media and technology have come within the purview of translation studies. The present essay discusses issues in translation obliquely by addressing its role in the making of literary history. Translation provides a model to redefine literary history in dialogic terms. (In fact, in an earlier version of this paper, I had used the term "translational" for "dialogic" in the title.) In Indian literary historiography, the crucial role played by translation in constituting the literary field and in the making of literary history, has largely been ignored. My attempt is to situate literary history in the larger context of 'Translation Studies'.

The discourse of literary historiography is informed as much by developments in social sciences as by those in arts and literature. What complicates the situation is the fact that literary history comes into being as part of the institutionalized study of literature. The nature of inclusion/exclusion operating within literary historiography can be understood only with reference to the institutional power structures ordaining their legitimacy. The classroom and the canon have been central to the question of literary historiography because literary histories were shaped by the institutions which also shaped the classroom and the canon.

The idea of the canon has come to be questioned by recent developments in the study of culture and society. Traditionally, teaching literature meant teaching the canon. This was largely an insular exercise that stressed the formal features of the text along with the period and the genre. The idea of 'literariness' was an unambiguous category that was

derived from canonical texts that upheld 'literary tradition' in an essentialist manner. With the shift of focus from the text to the reader, an essentialist way of understanding tradition has given way to multiple ways of reading texts. It is a critical commonplace now to say that literary values are not inherent in the works of literature but are produced in collaboration with a community that actively participates in the creation of the idea of 'the literary'. The social dimension of literature is fulfilled only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizons of expectations : objected by the texts. Hans Robert Jauss, in his essay, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" has argued that the reception of any work of art is conditioned as much by the social context that mediates between the text and the reader as by the expectations of the reader from the text. But Jauss does not help us comprehend the nature of the reception in social contexts where the production and circulation of literary texts are largely oral and multilingual. The example of *Jnaneswari* in Marathi may illustrate the point further. This 13th commentary on the *Bhagavat Gita* by Jnanadeva, galvanized the imagination of an entire population through his powerful use of Marathi which was yet to evolve as a literary language. By using the everyday language of Marathi for his philosophical poem, Jnanadeva created a community of listeners for whom literature was speech, performance and worship. As Ganesh Devy explains Jnanadeva's imagination could reconcile the conventions of oral tradition with the requirements of textual writing (Devy, 1998 : 51).

In Indian contexts, literature and the community in which it circulates cannot be separated. Literary historiography in India has to deal with the complex nature of utterance and the enunciation of the text, whether it is in the poetic texts of Alvars and the Lingayat poets of the South, the Jaina scholars of Gujarat, the Vaishnava poets of Bengal, the Sufi mystics or Kabir and Tulsidas with their own following in central India. The clue to the understanding of literary production of the sub-continent has to be sought in the community formation where sects that question hegemonic structures of power have articulated their dissent in the languages of everyday. We encounter this phenomenon variously in every part of India. Behind the rise of modern Indian languages like Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, Oriya and Malayalam are such collective expressions of social dissent. Often in the everyday cultural practices of the communities literature and worship become inseparable. The complex negotiations within caste structure and performance traditions also require careful study. Simon Charsley has

this to say on the caste status of performing artists in India :

We see them as rituals specialists, bards, members of acting troupes and event managers. We see how performing has been organized, and still is in many cases, as integral part of a caste system which has differentiated and fixed occupations within in-marrying groups, as hereditary and defining possessions. ...In this social universe shaped by caste, performance has been linked with Brahmins and their learning, but the performing itself has mainly been the concern of those placed low in the system. (Simon Charsley and Laxmi Kadekar 2006 : 41).

Needless to say, evaluation of production and consumption of 'texts' in such societies, cannot follow the norms of reception, and cultural production encountered in Western societies. In his essay on literary historiography in Malayalam, P. P. Raveendran argues that

The concept of literature in pre-modern Kerala was wide enough to accommodate all written discourses, indeed all discourses, their being little room for the privileging of a specifically aesthetic discourse. An aesthetic discourse gets crystallized only in the ideological environment produced as a result of prolonged colonial intervention (Raveendran 2009 : 71).

Genres such as *vachana*, *quissa* or *kilippattu* cannot be understood without reference to the dynamics of their transmission and preservation. Literary historiography in India will have to conceive of texts differently if they are to be studied against the context of social formation in India.

The division between pre-modern and modern phases in Indian literatures cannot be absolute as the forms of an earlier period continue to circulate in Indian society and also inform later composition and cultural productions. In the modernist phase in Indian poetry and drama, the renovation of genres was made possible by the assimilation of pre-modern modes of articulation. In his essay on "Tensions in Kannada Literary Culture", D. R. Nagaraj comments that "the absent and the invisible have to be taken as parties in the construction of literary cultures in South Asia" (Sheldon Pollock 2003: 335). Nagaraj argues that the institutional beginnings of literature in languages like Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil involved the repression of poetry as 'natural' activity as opposed to its formalization in the service of a courtly culture. When poetry was codified into 'poetics', texts like *Kavirajmarga* in Kannada or *Leelathilakam* in Malayalam performed acts of standardization

and exclusion that involved transactions between the cosmopolitan pan-Indian 'marga' and the regional-local 'desi'. Nagaraj says that "the notion of a universalizing cultural order such as that of Sanskrit has played a crucial role in the making of vernacular literary traditions" (ibid). A language such as Malayalam resisted the hegemonic elements present in both Tamil and Sanskrit in fashioning its self-identity, and this process involved selective assimilation of the local and the universal. It is through a dialogic model of acceptance and rejection that Malayalam could locate its cultural space in the prevailing hierarchical structures of power. This process involved translation as rewritings and adaptations at several levels. Such transactions and transformations are part of a dialogic process that reconstitutes the local and the universal in the context of a specific speech community. Elsewhere I have shown how the mainstream poetic tradition in Malayalam has defined a lexicon of social experience responding to the conflicting demands of the socio-cultural contexts (Ramakrishnan E. V. 2009: 29-41).

Such a selective assimilation of the local and the universal in the regional cultural tradition further raises issues regarding the very content of regional cultures. It is to be noted that they are not constituted along identical lines across India. This also means that what is radical or regressive in a culture can vary from region to region. The regional has to be seen as multiple and plural if we are to understand its social and cultural dynamics. The histories of "Indian Literature" tend to integrate the regions into a homogenous, self-contained whole. The region is a site of power struggle between several competing points of views and these struggles inform their cultural productions. Literary historiography in India has to take into account the dissent and resistance built into the dynamics of each literary tradition. For instance, the addressivity of *vachana* in Kannada or *kilippattu* in Malayalam is a response to the latent conflicts between the dominant and marginal voices in the field of culture. This, in turn, reflects the larger social inequalities based on caste, gender and power. The literary historiography that seeks legitimation from the endorsement of the canonical erases the conflictual elements in the field of culture.

For a clear delineation of the dynamics of cultural politics in India we would need an interdisciplinary approach to the questions of culture and history. We need to recover the subliminal voices that inform the production of literature and this will involve looking beyond the canons. Literary historiography in India was deeply implicated in the process

of nation formation and this has meant the constructions of canons that endorsed a selected view of history and culture. The canonical world of classics and the grand narrative of culture mutually reinforced each other. This effectively excluded several traditions that were not considered elitist. Dipesh Chakravarty has argued that when history became a popular subject in India at the turn of the twentieth century, Indian scholars who believed that historians in India and Europe belonged, to the same republic of letters joined together by a common bond of trust in the universality of the empire (Dipesh Chakravarty 2009: 143). Little did the Indian historians know that they were being co-opted into the imperial project. The noted Indologist R. G. Bhandarkar in a public lecture titled, "The Critical, Comparative and Historical Method" delivered on 31 March, 1888, said : "It is no use ignoring the fact that Europe is far ahead of us in all that constitutes civilization. And knowledge is one of the elements of civilization" (Ibid 147). Bhandarkar advised Indian scholars to follow the European 'critical, comparative and historical method'. Jadunath Sarkar was another scholar who advocated a scientific approach to history along the same lines. By aligning themselves with Western scholars, Indian historians saw the cultural productions of India through Western eyes. To be fair to them they were also uneasy about their affiliation to the imperial project. They resisted the rationality that the empire represented in matters of culture and politics. This ambivalence is best illustrated by nationalist discourse that looked toward the future as well as to the past. While endorsing rationality in matters of the public world in general, the nationalist discourse resisted it in the private domain of personal life and the field of culture. This resulted in the inability of the nationalistic discourse to accommodate the cosmologies that were divergent and deviant. As Dipesh Chakravarty comments, "this vision of the nation was predicated on the assumption that elites were capable of overcoming deep-seated social conflicts to usher in an age of social harmony" (Ibid: 150). Literary historiography of late 19th century and early 20th century also shared the blindness inherent in the nationalist discourse. We need to recover the texts missing from the literary historiography of this period. One of the most influential literary histories of Malayalam, namely *Kerala Sahitya Charitram* by Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, has very little to say on the cultural productions of the marginalized sections of people. He shows a patronizing attitude towards the women writers or writers of the lower caste when they are mentioned. He hardly has anything to say on the social context of

colonialism though he was a civil servant under the king of Travancore. He does not relate the shifts in literary sensibility in the modern context to the arrival of the printing press, the assertion of the lower castes for civil rights or the emergence of a public sphere. In other words, the literary field is seen as autonomous and self-contained with its own internal codes. None of the major translations that appeared during the period find a mention here, though the latter half of the 19th century saw a spate of translations in every genre of literature. R. Narayana Panikker's seven volume *Bhasah Sahitya Charitram*, is highly critical of the Progressive movement, as it eschews moral instruction which is seen as the primary objective of all literature. He sees the present phase of Malayalam literature of the mid-twentieth century as a period of decline. Such value judgements are rooted in the literary historiography of the 19th century where Victorian world-views tended to dominate the scene. It has been observed that Narayana Panikker's history borrows W. H. Hudson's views on the relation between language and literature in formulating its own approach to literary historiography.

Now that historians have begun to contest the term 'history' from within, we need to interrogate the terms and conditions implicit in literary historiography. Social and cultural histories have to be incorporated into histories of literature. They are not 'backgrounds' to the study of literature, but integral to the study of texts. Discrete texts that are canonized into a dominant literary tradition have turned literary history into the biography of authors. A dialogic model of literary history would not define 'literariness' in exclusive terms. What is relegated to the backyards of 'folk literature' needs to be reclaimed as cultural products of the community. In Indian literature, the distinction between 'folk' and 'mainstream' literature was the product of the colonial world-views infiltrating the domains of culture. There are multiple parts to be recovered. As in translation, the question of equivalence is of great significance in literary historiography. Our 'Romanticism' or 'Modernism' may not share the contents of the Western topologies. What the existing literary historiography has done is to synchronize our literary texts with the temporal templates of Eurocentric notions of literariness. This has alienated our cultural products from us, assimilating the texts into narratives that dislocate and distort them. We need to reimagine literary historiography to relocate ourselves in its narratives. This will be the beginning of addressing the strange case of the missing texts. In the field of history, one notices that the nationalist consensus on historiography has given way to

'combative narratives' from previously colonized communities. Badri Narayan's *Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India* is an example of the new 'combative history' which interrogates received models of writing histories. This answers to the demand for alternative models of history based on representations of the past that were not considered legitimate by elitist views on history. They may not conform to the rigorous methodologies of academic history, but they participate in the public sphere by interrogating elitist notions of identity.

Our alienation from certain kinds of cultural pasts may be illustrated through an anecdote. In Kerala, some 'folk' poems were prescribed for a paper in the Post-graduate course of Malayalam. No teacher of Malayalam had any clue as to what these long narratives were about or what they meant. It so happened that a teacher was voicing his frustration openly in the staff-room. A woman who was employed in the college as sweeper overheard it and volunteered to explain those poems. She could recite from memory more than 300 long oral narratives belonging to the rich oral traditions of Kerala. Subsequently she became a sought-after speaker in colleges and in the Refresher Courses organized by Academic Staff colleges in Kerala. This Dalit Christian woman knew these narratives from within, and could explain the subtle nuances of those texts in detail and relate them to practice of rituals, contexts of performance and social history. The cultural products of oral traditions are yet to be reclaimed as part of our mainstream literary history. This would also help us to remap the complex inter-relations between the canonical and the non-canonical.

We need micro-histories that go into the complex matrix of relations that a text embodies. We also need to relate what is the non-literary to the literary. For instance, there has been no history of the print revolution in India. The 19th century saw a massive shift not only in literary sensibility but in the use of literary genres. Though much has been written on early novels, the shift from what is considered 'pre-modern' forms towards the novel, the short story, the essay, the modern proscenium play, autobiography and the like marks an unprecedented shift towards a new paradigm of representation. Our mental landscapes were reconstituted in accordance with Western codes in those few years when these forms came to represent something vital for our speech communities. It amounted to redrawing the social contract with new fine print attached. The implications of the investment we made in these forms thus need to be critically evaluated. What D. R. Nagaraj says about the codification of poetry into poetics and the consequent

repression of cultural forms may be relevant to the study of the 19th century too. The colonial context introduced alien codes of representation that recast the relations between our language and reality. This also involved acts of standardization and exclusion, that established a new hierarchy between the alien traditions and the already existing regional-local and pan-Indian traditions. Literary forms are related as much to social formations as to the dialogic potential of a society. They are part of the larger dialogue that happens in any society. The reorganization of our literary forms involved setting new paradigms for addressing contemporary society and this excluded large sections of people from the dialogic process of self-articulation. Literary historiography that will address issues of the kind listed here would necessarily have to be a dialogic one in the sense that it would investigate the codes that make literary representation possible.

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INTERPRETING EARLY MODERN KANNADA TRANSLATIONS ¹

This paper is an attempt to identify and understand the cultural processes that went into the project of early translations in Kannada, particularly during the early phase of modern Kannada literature. An early experimentation period spreading over a period of forty years (1880-1920) constitutes a very important phase of modern Kannada literature, as the histories of literatures show little interest in discussing the role of these early translations. The paper attempts to understand the cultural sensibilities of a newly emerging literate class, which involved both writers and readers and is reflected in different components of translation such as text, genre, language etc.

Translation as an act of transfer of knowledge, information and ideas from one language to another is a colonial enterprise with the purpose of educating and civilizing the colonial masses. This is radically different from rendering from one Indian language to another which existed during medieval Indian literature, where they were considered as independent creative works, despite many of them openly declaring their indebtedness to prior texts on which they were based. Actually translation brings in cultural contact and thereby, creates crossings of linguistic, religious, social, cultural and ideological dimensions. Thus, in order to understand the early translations of a region and nation that were yet to be constructed or in the process of making, we need to interrogate the colonial links, nature of interrelationship among languages involved in the contact and their linguistic histories. Interrogating the process of early translations during the colonial period, the paper points out that the selection and avoidance of texts for translation, the popularity of certain texts, languages and genres over others actually reveal the processes of cultural transactions. The paper also attempts

to incorporate the role played by intermediate agencies such as the press, theatre, both professional and amateur, and the role of readers and audience in bringing about such changes and transformations, thereby suggesting a change in sensibilities among the neo-literates and others during the period of study.

1. Introduction :

B. M. Srikanthaiah's (Sri) 'kannada mātu tale-y-ettuva bage' (how Kannada language can raise its head) which discusses the problems in the development of Kannada language, was a lecture delivered at Vidya Vardhaka Sangha in Dharwar in December 1911. This paper has been printed subsequently and has been considered by the Kannada critics as the landmark statement of Kannada modernism. As a lecturer of English at the University of Mysore and at the same time keen on bringing modernity into Kannada literature, Sri's observations on translation and the sources that he advocated for translation activity in Kannada are highly noteworthy. Let us consider what he said about the role of English literature and what role translations from English could play in modernizing Kannada literature.

Only English literature can ward off the faults (dōṣa) that has crept into our kāvya tradition from Sanskrit (Sri 1911 : 51).

Elsewhere, Sri (1928 : 73) in a paper titled 'kannadigarige olleṣa sāhitya' (good literature for the Kannada people) feels that there is no significant benefit either from old or medieval Kannada literature as they belong to an old world ('purātana prapaṃcada sāhitya'). Despite his passionate love for Kannada, Sri considers that old and medieval Kannada literatures are not of much relevance today. However, we need to note that his attitude towards Sanskrit is not as hard as it is towards old and medieval Kannada.

Just as we have developed our kāvya tradition with a training and nourishment from Sanskrit right from the beginning, in the same way we need to develop it through a training and nourishment in English literature, which has been given to us *with the grace of the god* (Sri 1911 : 51, italics mine).

It is with such an ideological position and translation activity guided by it that we need to understand and problematize the issues related with early Kannada translations. Let us look briefly at the scene of translation activity in Kannada at the time when Sri made these statements in 1911.

2. Problematization

There are a few issues that need to be kept in mind while we interrogate the scene of translation activity during the period of early modern Kannada. The seventh volume of *kannada granthasūci* that provides bibliographic information on translations done into Kannada, which I have used here to get a perspective of translation activity in Kannada during the early phase was not available to Sri. Kannada linguistic regionalism was still in the initial stages of formation and the advocates of regional identity were struggling to make their presence felt among the people. Hence, the urge for linguistic identity and the role that literature could play in its formation was yet to be formulated. The movement for unification of Karnataka, to construct a region of Kannada speaking people had just then began or still was in its formative phase. A tension between nationalism and regionalism, which had to be constructed and nurtured at the same time, had become a challenge for the newly educated and there was a compulsion on the part of this group to emphasize the nationalist agenda and down play the regional agenda. Above all, the translation activity in different Kannada speaking regions, namely, the Princely State of Mysore, the regions in Bombay Karnatak belonging to Bombay Presidency, the regions in Madras Presidency and the territories under the Nizam of Hyderabad, were engaged in literary and translation activities independently of each other. All these aspects must have contributed to the formulation of the ideological position that Sri adopted in his 1911 address.

As even a frequency count of the literary works published in Kannada during this period has not been made by anyone, we need to reconstruct the literary archive that was available for the Kannada readers during the period when translation activity emerged in Kannada. We can start our inquiry with a slightly differently framed question : towards the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, what sorts of books were available to the newly emerging educated, middle class

Kannada readership? Interestingly, there were not many and they could all have been easily contained within a single book case. In all, there were about 250 texts available at that point of time, which included poetry, novel, short story and drama, whether they were originals or translations.

The availability of a relatively small number of literary texts obviously had significant implications for the reading community. For any reader of Kannada who was interested in reading only the novels, there were hardly about 35 novels or rather novel-like narratives out of which as many as 25 were translations from English, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam and Sanskrit. Table 1 provides the details of novels translated from different languages into Kannada during 1875-1920.

Language	Eng.	Ben.	Tel.	Mar.	Mal.	Skt.	Total
Number	7	14	3	1	1	1	27
%	24	49	11	3	3	3	

Table 1 : Language-wise distribution of novels translated into Kannada during the period 1875-1920.

Interestingly only nine novels written originally in Kannada were available to the readers and the rest of the 27 were translations. Thus the early phase of Kannada novel probably did not differentiate between originals and translations as the need for fiction was an urgent necessity of the time. Hence the reading universe available to the Kannada readers towards the end of the nineteenth century, in quantitative terms, was relatively small and it would not be inappropriate if we subsume that unlike today, the readers would have been reading all types of fiction (and other genre) that were available in the public domain. Thus narratives of different types, including the prose renderings of plays, historical, social and detective novels etc., might have become a part and parcel of the reading repertoire of the readers. We should also note that many of these readers were women who had started going to school and had become literate by that time. It is this unique aspect that makes the beginning of early modern Kannada literature in general and translations in particular interesting and problematic. In fact, blurring

of genre-specific and sub-genre-specific characteristics in literary adaptations could be conspicuously seen during the early modern Kannada literature.

The complex, rather telescopic nature of the reader's sensibilities is reflected in the nature of many of these early translations. The historical and social distinction that is usually made in the case of European novel does not work effectively in the case of Indian novel. There are several instances where the same Indian novelist has written historical, social and mythological novels. Similarly, a single novel might incorporate social and detective elements and result into a socio-detective novel. Gulvadi Venkatarao's (1899) *indirābāyi* is an ideal example of such a hybrid variety. Another interesting characteristic aspect of early modern Indian literature is, that written under such circumstances, the historical, social and detective novels would not have had radically different and exclusive agenda for the genre and sub-genre. As pointed out earlier, *indirābāyi* also incorporates moralistic concerns in addition to social and detective concerns and such overlapping could be seen in almost all genre or sub-genre of representations.

The presence of a large body of texts translated from Sanskrit obviously must have been felt by Sri and his contemporaries. This is substantiated by the concession that Sri has shown towards translations from Sanskrit. However, what is intriguing is that despite translations from Bengali, Telugu and Marathi constituting a sizeable number compared to those from English, it appears to have not attracted Sri's attention. A look at Table 2 reveals that by 1911, in terms of number of works translated from English, it stood at the second position (25) and stood next to Sanskrit (70). However, by 1921, not only English had gone to the third position by yielding the second position to Bengali (51), but also shared the third position with Telugu (31). In addition, we should also note that the gain in terms of number of translations between 1911 and 1921 (decadal variation) was significantly less for English (+6, %) as compared to Bengali (+26, %), Telugu (12, %) and Marathi (+14, %). How Sri could ignore these glaring trends in early phase of translation activity in Kannada and could make the sort of comments he made in 1911 needs to be explored further. In order to get a better picture of the translation activity during the early phase, we need to take a closer look with more details.

Year	Eng.	Ben.	Tel.	Mar.	Tam.	Mal.	Skl.	Total
1911	25	25	19	08	02	01	70	150
1921	31	51	31	22	05	01	130	271

Table 2. *Language-wise distribution of Kannada Translations by the first and second decade of the twentieth century*

In the preface to the seventh volume of *kannada grāṁthasūci*, the bibliographical volume of translations into Kannada, Nayak et. al. (1974) observed that during the period 1817-1968, as many as 1,974 translations were done into Kannada. Table 3 provides an overall picture of translation activity in Kannada during the period 1817-1968 and the sources of translation. Though the data demonstrates interesting trends in translation activity from languages within and outside India, it does not reveal temporal changes that took place in the translation activity.

Language	No. of Tr.	% of Tr.
Sanskrit	820	41.5
Bengali	293	14.8
English	211	10.7
Hindi	127	6.4
Marathi	113	5.7
Telugu	98	4.9
Tamil	86	4.3
Russian	50	2.5
French	33	1.7
American Eng.	25	1.3
Greek	16	0.8
Persian	13	0.7
Malayalam	9	—
Indian English	8	—
German	7	—
Chinese	7	—
Urdu	6	—
Gujarati	4	—
Pali	2	—

Table 3. *Language wise distribution of Kannada translations during 1861-1974*

A closer look at the frequency of translations on a temporal axis reveals that during the first few decades the translation activity was almost absent and that gradually and slowly picked up only towards the end of the nineteenth century. Table 4 provides a decade-wise distribution of early translations into Kannada.

Decade	1861-70	1871-80	1881-90	1891-1900	1901-10	1911-20
Numbers	1	7	40	100	150	270

Table 4. Decade-wise distributions of
Kannada translations during 1860-1920.

In general, translations prior to 1920 could be called adaptations and that of the post-1920 period may be said to be literal translations suggesting their closeness to the originals. It should be noted that the pre-1920 period is the period of precursors for modern Kannada literature, whether the case is novel, drama or poetry. Modern literature in Kannada is conspicuously marked by events such as the establishment of the University of Mysore, the publication of the translations of English Romantic poems in Kannada *ingliṣ-gītegaḷu* by B. M. Srikanthaiah (1921), the first social play *ṭollu-gaṭṭi* 'the hollow and the solid' by T. P. Kailasam (1921) and the first novel *māḍiduṇṇō-māharaya* 'eat whatever you have cooked', a proverb with the meaning 'suffer for your deeds', by M. S. Puttanna (1916). Around the same time, Hattiyangadi Narayanarao and his associates in the Bombay Karnataka region and Manjeshwara Govinda Pai and others in the coastal Karnataka region were engaged in similar types of activity. It should be noted that a majority of the translations for which the date of publication is not available in *kannada granṭhasūci* happen to be translations from the pre-1920 period. A conspicuous aspect of these early translations is that the titles, names of the characters, locales, settings, sequences and in certain cases the ending itself (tragedy to comedy) have undergone modifications. It is these early translations that I intend to investigate in this paper.

3. Morality

Righteousness or morality appears to be the most important concern of early modern literature in Kannada. Hence we can notice texts that reflect such concerns being preferred for translations during the early phase. The translation of a predominantly large number of Sanskrit texts might as well reflect the moral concerns. Subhāṣitas and nīti texts are some of the types of texts that were popular among the early translators. As early as 1893 Bhamaji Sri Adabadi, translating the moralistic poems justifies his attempt as follows :

It is true that this work is predominantly moralistic in nature. However, in order to entertain the readers, erotic (śṛṅgāra) poems, poems in praise of gods (stōtra) and the descriptions of the fame and valour of kings could also be found here.

It is interesting to note that two out of five texts translated from Tamil during the pre-1920 period consisted of *nītimanyari I* and *nītimanyari II*, which were translations of poems from the Tamil ancient text *āttacūṭi* by Avveyar. Panje Mangesha Rao, writing in the pages of the literary journal *savāsini* in 1904 almost complains against translator and publisher M.A. Ramanujayyengar, that there is an undue delay on his part in bringing out the second volume of the text. Such instances suggest the inherent bias that the early literary phase of Kannada had towards morality and the expectation that literature would impart it to the readers.

5. Translating Music and Culture

In order to point out how radically different types of archives need to be constructed and how they could expand our understanding of the process of translation and the role played by the readers/audience, we would like to take up a particular example from the professional theatre. This will also provide an opportunity to look at translation as a cultural process and decentre it from text-centred and Eurocentric readings of the process of translation. Those who are familiar with Indian theatre, in particular the early Marathi theatre, have heard the name of Ann Saheb Kiroloskar who has been considered as one of the pioneering figures of Marathi theatre. His theatre company, known popularly as Kiroloskar Company, used to tour and stage Marathi plays all over Maharashtra and the northern parts of Karnataka. One of the famous

productions of the Kirloskar Company was *subhadra-vijaya*, otherwise popularly known as *sāṃgīta saubhadra*, a play written and staged by Kirloskar himself in 1882. The historians of Kannada theatre say that the plays performed by Kirloskar Company were very well received by the Marathi and Kannada theatre lovers within the north Karnataka region. The popularity of the Marathi play could be gauged by the fact that its Kannada translation, *karnāṭaka subhādra-vijaya nāṭakaṃ*, by Bengal Ramarao appeared in 1906. The translation was done as early as 1886 by Ramarao while he was studying in Pune but had to wait for a decade for its publication. However, if we stop at this point that *subhadra-vijaya*'s Kannada translation was done in 1906, which is the information provided in the seventh volume of *kannada granthasāhici* (1984), then we are completely at loss. In order to understand the cultural significance of this translation, we need to construct an archive than can provide us the right information to interpret the process involved in such a cultural exchange.

First of all, how the episode of Arjuna's elopement in the guise of a mendicant with Subhadra, could become a highly popular episode needs to be addressed. There appears to be historical reasons for the region's fascination with the episode that highlights Arjuna's exploits in the guise of an ascetic. Scholars (Smith 1995) have pointed out that the episode of Arjuna as an ascetic fighting with Kirāta Śiva was highly popular within the region of Karnataka. Apart from Bharavi's famous Sanskrit work *Kirātārjunīya*³, and the South Indian recensions of the *Mahābhārata*⁴, the region had its own folk version of the episode. Archeologist Rao (1979) has pointed out that this folk version is that in which Arjuna defeats Kirāta Śiva in the fight, overpowers him and presses his toe against Śiva's throat. It is said that Śiva knowingly and happily accepted such a defeat to show Pārvati an auspicious mark that exists on the shoulder of Arjuna. This version is attested not only from the Jaina poet Pampa's *Vikramārjuna-vijayaṃ*, (c. 932 A.D.), but also from as many as twenty-six sculptural reliefs from the Rashtrakuta, Chalukya and Hoysala temples spanning over a period of eighth to fourteenth century A.D. The continuation of this version of the story in textual, oral and pictorial representations from the Karnataka region demonstrates the parallel existence and continuation of multiple versions suggesting a pluralistic epistemology.⁵

Kinnari Jōgis, a term usually used to refer to a specific group of itinerary singers in Karnataka, is one among several types of Jōgis who have been identified as belonging to a scheduled tribe. The Kinnari jōgis, as nomadic singers sing and enact the episodes of the *Mahābhārata* and other stories to the accompaniment of Kinnari. They call their version of the *Mahābhārata* story as *Arjuna-jōgi-hāḍu* 'the song of Arjuna Jogi' in which they tell a version of the story, where Arjuna, in the guise of a Jōgi, goes on a pilgrimage and marries Subhadrā, Citrāṅgadā and Ulūpi. What is more important and relevant for our discussion here is that the itinerary of the Kinnari Jōgis includes regions from Kannada, Telugu and Marathi speaking regions and they sing the epic in all the three languages.

This suggests that both synchronically and diachronically on the one hand and in literature, folklore and performing traditions on the other, the episode of Arjuna as an ascetic was a highly popular one within the region of Karnataka. However, we still need to fill up the temporal gap that exists between representations from the medieval period and the contemporary folk version of the Kinnari Jōgis in order to establish a continuity regarding the popularity of the theme. The Kālāmukhas of Karnataka and the associations of the sect with taṃtra is a well established fact among scholars (c.f. Lorenzen). We know the Kannada inscriptions which refer to land and other grants to Kālāmukha sectarian gurus start sometime during the eighth century A.D. and continue till the end of the fourteenth century. Kannada scholars are of the opinion that after the fourteenth century, the Kālāmukhas must have merged with other dominant Śaivite sectarian groups (the Vīraśaivas) of the region. Scholars like Zydenbose (1974) have suggested that the elements of taṃtric cults might have been assimilated into the folk and popular cults prevalent in the region, eventually leading to the emergence of independent Jaina Yakṣi worshipping cults in Karnataka and South Maharashtra regions.

All these points mentioned above provide evidence for the popularity of the theme of Arjuna as an ascetic, be it a sanyāsi⁶, a jōgi or a yati. In fact, in one of the popular songs in the Marathi play *subhadrā-vijaya*, Subhadrā begs Arjuna not to tease her any more : 'bahuta cheḍiyale nāthā bahuta cheḍiyale'. It is interesting to point out that there is a direct reference to Arjuna's 'yati vēṣa' in the song. Thus the theme of

Arjuna as an ascetic has been repeatedly worked and reworked in classical and folk, written and oral, and secular and sectarian contexts, thereby making the theme a highly popular one among the people of the region, cutting across the linguistic and sectarian boundaries, and at the same time, making the people aware of the pluralistic epistemology associated with the episode.

The critics and historians of theatre, both in Kannada and Marathi have claimed that *subhadra-vijaya* remained as a highly popular musical and enthralled the audience. The popularity of the play and its songs could be judged by the fact that as recently as in 2002, HMV/SAREGAMA has released a two cassette volume of songs from the play under the title 'Unforgettable Treasures' which contains songs sung by renowned singers like Vasantaro Deshpande, Bal Gandharva, Chota Gandharva, Prabhakar Karlekar, Hirabai Barodekar and Malini Rajurkar. Having made an attempt to map the popularity of the theme, there is a need to demonstrate the popularity of the songs of the play. What factors contributed to the popularity of the songs of the play? I would like to suggest that two aspects, firstly the folk genesis of the songs that is collectively shared by the Marathi and Kannada speaking communities of the southern Maharashtra and north Karnataka regions and secondly, the shared bilingual-bicultural aesthetic sensibilities of the linguistic communities of the region were responsible for the popularity of the play. Of course, this is not to belittle the role of superb acting by the actors and the spectacular stage-craft that the Kirloskar Company was offering to its audience.

Kurtukoti (1989), one of the leading critics of Kannada literature and theatre has pointed out that the early Marathi versions of Kirloskar's *subhadra-vijaya* carried instructions about the tunes of the songs in the play. This suggests that the early actors and audience were probably familiar with the guide tunes that were mentioned in the printed Marathi texts. Let us now consider one of the most popular songs from the play, 'pāṃḍu nṛpati janaka jaya'. In the HMV/SAREGAMA edition, we have two renderings of this song, one by Suhasini Jogalekar and the other by Malini Rajurkar.

Kurtukoti, further notes that the instruction given for this song in the Marathi text suggests that it should be sung in the tune of 'kṣīra sāgara namma mani'. This reference is in Kannada and is actually to

a song from *śrīkṛṣṇpārijāta*, a popular folk play from the north Karnataka region. The footprint of the performing region of play includes Belgaon district to which Kirloskar, the author of *subhadra-vijaya* belongs. The song is sung by Rukmini, and means that her abode is the ocean of milk. Kurtukoti further observes that like this song the other songs of *subhadra-vijaya* too are indebted to the tunes of the songs in *śrīkṛṣṇpārijāta*.

We need to remember that Anna Saheb Kirloskar himself was from Gurlahosur, a village in the Balgaon district of Karnataka. However, it was a part of the Bombay Karnatak region during those days and was under Bombay Presidency till the reorganization of states in 1957. It was predominantly a Kannada-Marathi bilingual area and has continued to remain so even today. It is often pointed out by critics that the Kirloskar Company used to visit the north Karnataka region frequently and staged their plays. It is quite possible that the early Marathi actors were bilingual and were familiar with the tunes and the performances of *śrīkṛṣṇpārijāta*. Even today folk plays like *saṅgyā-bālyā* are popular with both Kannada and Marathi speaking population and the Gōṃḍālīs, who sing folk epics on Āṃbābhāvanī and perform them both in Marathi and Kannada depending upon the linguistic affinity of the audience. If one listens to the tune of 'kṣīra sāgara namma mani' first and then to 'paṃḍu nrpati janaka jaya' sung by Suhasini Jogalekar and Malini Rajurkar, then the classicism and sophistication achieved by the song becomes clearly evident. However, this also suggests a series of exchanges of tastes and sensibilities that has taken place between the Marathi and Kannada theatre traditions on the one hand and the performers and audience on the other over a period of time. Otherwise, we could not have seen another reference in the pages of the seventh volume of *kannaḍa graṇṭhasūci*, where we find another reference of the translation of *saṅgīta saubhadra nāṭakada padyāvalī*, published by the Gandharva Nataka Mandali of Dharwar in 1941. By this time the tunes of *subhadra-vijaya* had become so popular that the refined Marathi tunes became model tunes for several of the songs of Kannada plays. If we remember that the 1940s were the days of declining glory of Kannada professional theatre with theatre companies closing one after another due to the impact of the newly emerging cinema, then the publication of *saṅgīta saubhadra nāṭakada padyāvalī* in 1941 tells us altogether a

different type of translation process. It is the cultural heritage of Marathi-Kannada bilingual region, with its in-built knowledge about the episode of Arjuna in the guise of an ascetic prevalent among the performing traditions of the region on the one hand and collectively shared folk and popular music traditions on the other that were getting translated during the early part of the twentieth century. This takes us to an interface zone of colonial modernity, national cultural sphere and regional identities in which translation studies needs to be located, be it in the literal sense or in the metaphorical sense discussed here.

The new proscenium theatre, the Jacobean theatre and its realism, the gas lamps have all come from the west, there is no doubt about it, including the concept of translation as a printed text. But what was really happening during the period of early Kannada translations was the translation of music and translation of cultural sensibilities and above all, the blurring of technical terms that guide translation such as target language, recipient language, translation, trans-creation, recreation, difference, infidelity, gap etc. Such negotiations and mappings have eventually given birth to a sense of national culture, blending western and local classical and folk elements into a unique combination, thereby creating an Indian modernity that incorporated sensibilities that are both cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan at the same time. Several volumes of research work have clearly demonstrated the impact of western influence on Kannada literature. There is no disagreement about it. It is time for us to look at the cultural aspects of translation activity.

NOTES :

1. An earlier version of the paper was presented at the National Seminar on Translation, Interpretation and Culture: Trends and Methods held at Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay during December 9-10, 2004. I sincerely thank Subha Chakraborty Dasgupta for encouraging me to work on the paper again to bring it to the present shape.
2. The author teaches Kannada and Comparative Indian Literature at the Department of Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies, University of Delhi.
3. Petterson (1991) suggests that the play was written in the court of the Western Ganga King.

4. The story is from the vana parva of the *muhābhārata* and is distributed in the arjunābhigamana parva, kairāta parva and indralokāgamana parva.
5. For a detailed discussion see Satyanath (2009).
6. An idiomatic expression in Kannada 'arjuna sanyāsi' actually refers to a lascivious person in the guise of an ascetic.

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6. Śrī. kannāḍa mātu taleyettuva bage. *śrī sāhitya*. Mysore : University of Mysore, 1911
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IN DEFENCE OF INTERSEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

*Translators...have to be traitors, but most of the time they don't know it, and nearly all the time they have no other choice, not as long as they remain within the boundaries of the culture that is theirs by birth or adoption."*¹

The quote above is a clichéd observation about translations, but perhaps there has never been a more apt description of a translator's dilemma either. Interestingly, my computer thesaurus is very prolific with synonyms of the word 'traitor' — they are as following: *conspirator, collaboration, turncoat, defector, defector, deserter, spy, double agent* and to compensate for the unpleasant word it comes up with a mild antonym, *loyalist*. The synonyms unconsciously capture the different and often contrastive natures of the translator's art. S/he betrays, yet collaborates, s/he is a turncoat and a double agent but also is loyal to a principle — the necessity of making a bridge between two cultures.

To use Coetzee's words in a different context, the translator's problem is "a simple bridging problem."² The translator leaves behind her/his territory in which s/he was and reaches a far territory, where s/he wants to be. Yet paradoxically s/he in a way regresses because the territory which is the goal means going back to the source, i.e. the original authorial intention. Yet the authorial intention has to be gauged through the mediation of a language not the author's own, with its own dynamics and cultural dimensions.

So the question remains : to whom or what is the translator a traitor? Does s/he betray the text s/he translates, the reader, or the languages — the source and target ones? Lefevere's words hold a clue to escape though — if the translator can *avoid* being within the boundaries of the culture that is theirs by birth or adoption. Which is just a play with words really because the translator of force has to be born in and adopt the two

languages in which s/he is dealing. If the original author is dead, not in the Barthian sense but in the more mundane one, then the intention can only be approximated, not actually reproduced; the reader's interpretation is very often at variance with that of the translator and language is perhaps the biggest victim as well as the most guilty, as the synonyms of the word 'traitor' thrown up by the MS Word dictionary exhibit — each word manifesting a particular aspect of a concept, not the whole of it.

These observations that I throw around so casually and I am afraid in so facetious a manner is almost a defensive gesture hiding the nervousness I feel on my attempts at translating Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, one of the greatest and most loved authors of Bengal. The feeling of lack of confidence stems primarily from an acceptance of the possibility of the presence of meanings in the reader's mind other than those disseminated by the translator. Prior to this realization comes the acceptance of the basic subservience of the translator to the text.

To come back to the personal note, when I took up Bibhutibhushan's works I had really no conscious motive behind my choice. Later analysis provided some reasons like the feeling of love and admiration for a great author and perhaps a hint of confidence stemming from the fact of my bilingual education which I felt rendered me capable of translating a vernacular text with felicity into English. Is there also a feeling of responsibility in my role of translator — a cultural ambassadorial role perhaps? Stronger than any motive is the attraction of the beguiling visual quality of Bibhutibhushan's language. A quality which renders his writing so very pleasurable to the reader of the vernacular text, but poses the utmost difficulty to the translator. The translator, as a reader partaking of the experiences of the writer and the characters of the stories/novels, finds Bibhutibhushan too easy to read and empathize with. The other tempting quality about him as an author is his quintessential Bengali-ness. The cultural 'belongingness' is so strongly manifest in Bibhutibhushan that it occasionally eclipses the universal quality of his thought. He has often been compared to Wordsworth and Thoreau in his love for nature, his compassion for the marginalized. What distinguishes him however is his deep love for the Bengal countryside — the beauty of its nature, its human objects, the vanishing customs and practices. Bibhutibhushan had seemed regional, even parochial, in his attachment to a particular milieu. At the same time

his limitation in terms of his artistic eschewal of the larger universe is compensated for by his humanity which finds a reflection of the universal in the particular, the sublime in the domestic.

Bibhutibhushan presents a stiff challenge to the translator not because of his rootedness in this culture, which even in his own day was disappearing fast, but because stylistically and thematically he alternates between the sublime and the domestic, the poetic and the prosaic, the mystical and the material. The domestic/prosaic/material part is eminently translatable. But the other elements are not. Interestingly Bibhutibhushan uses the same lucid prose to convey both aspects of his thought to the reader. I use the term 'lucid' in its dictionary meaning of transparent. His prose is almost transparent in its ability to convey an idea to the vernacular reader. There is no apparent artifice involved. This kind of language creates a strange kind of problem. When it describes the material there can be nothing easier to translate, but this ease when used for deeper thoughts creates an illusion of simplicity, which in translation falls far short of what is meant or signified or intended. So what we often have is almost pure image, seemingly in limbo without the frame of language. This image, amounting to silence because of its seeming independence of language creates breaches in the otherwise translatable flow. This property of Bibhutibhushan's prose almost belies the Saussurian model of language. Here language is no longer a simple signifier for the idea/object. It in fact is more akin to poetic language — where the word does not construct but *becomes* the idea, or words refuse to be separated into isolable segments for construction of meaning. With the thinning of the linguistic boundary between thought and expression, a peculiar phenomenon happens, which can be best expressed as a concept with a 'blurred edge' as described by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953. The concepts no longer can be contained within the rigid boundaries of language, but must spill over and appeal to the reader's imagination, memory, and experience not only intellectual and emotional but physical — arousing sensations mostly visual, but often tactile, gustatory and olfactory as well. In fact images apparently untranslatable through mere language because their genesis occurs not only through language, but often the reader's extralinguistic comprehensive faculties like memories and associations.

The translator of Bibhutibhushan's *Aparajito* in the preface to the translation asks the reader,

[...] have I succeeded? Has justice been done to Bibhutibhushan's beautiful language? Have I been able to convey the depth of his vision?

The question is an ambiguous one — because it might be making a distinction between language and vision, or admitting that in Bibhutibhushan language is the vision. It is a query that occurs to every translator of poetic prose.

Walter Benjamin in his preface to his translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens* makes an extremely interesting if ambiguous observation about the problem of translating poetry which I think applies to Bibhutibhushan's language too :

What *does* a work of literature *say*? What does it communicate? Very little to someone who understands it. It does not, by its essential nature, inform or assert. Nevertheless, the translation that was concerned merely to communicate could transmit simply that — communication : in other words, the non-essential. And that is a characteristic of bad translations. But what there is besides communication in a literary work — and even the bad translator admits that this is the essential : is it not the illimitable, the inapprehensible, the poetic? ... Translation can be nothing more than [an inaccurate rendering of non-essential content] so long as it persists in serving the reader ... If the original does not exist for the reader, how should a translation? *

Then why translate the un-translatable? I would argue that the same urge that drives somebody like Benjamin to translate Baudelaire despite such a deep distrust in the ability of translation to communicate the 'illimitable' and 'inapprehensible', works behind all attempts to translate authors with apparently un-translatable qualities. Benjamin explains it as consisting of a search for the elusive, transcendental universal language which has the capacity to gather and smooth out the conflicts between different cultural significations :

How are two languages related, apart from their historical connection? Certainly as little by the resemblance of two literary works as by the resemblance of words. Rather all kinship of languages that goes beyond historical derivation is based on this : that in each of them individually one thing, in fact the same thing, is meant — something however which cannot be attained by any one language alone.

but only by the totality of their mutually supplementary intentions : pure, universal language. While, in fact all the individual elements — words, sentences, contexts — in foreign languages exclude each other, in their intentions the languages supplement each other. The desire to comprehend this principle exactly — one of the fundamental principles of the philosophy of language — is implicit in the intention to distinguish between *what* is meant and the *manner* of meaning.⁵

Benjamin's take on the task of the translator sounds more philosophical than literary, a bit Platonic too insofar as he gives the intention of the author almost complete autonomy over the language. In fact in one sense mere words that the author himself uses might be an imperfect vehicle because intentionality is not yielded by the single meaning of a single word but by the mass of supplementary meanings surrounding it — something which a mere linguistic synonymic translation can never hope to achieve.

Spivak on the other hand captures the perpetual tension between the communicable language and the incommunicable silence in the following manner,

...language is not everything. It is only a vital clue to where the self loses its boundaries. The way in which rhetoric and figuration disrupt logic themselves point at the possibility of random contingency, beside language and around language ... in translation, where meaning hops into the spacy emptiness between the two named historical languages, we get perilously close to it. ... The task of the translator is to facilitate this love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying [of the language textile], holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay. [...] First, then, the translator must surrender to the text. She must solicit the text to show the limits of its language, because that rhetorical aspect will point at the silence of the absolute fraying of the language that the text wards off, in its special manner.⁶

Both are talking about the inadequacy, even impossibility of interlinguistic translation. Benjamin to overcome the discomfort of inadequate communication would take the reader out of the picture and emphasize the hegemony of the text/author but would recognize translation as necessary because the elusive universal/true language is broken in the original itself and translation "rather than following the sense of the original, must fit itself in its own language, with loving particularity, to the original's *manner* of meaning : so that both languages (like fragments of one vase) may be recognized as fragments of a greater language"⁷

So translation has a great purpose to serve, by making available one part of the pure language to which the whole text aims and of which the original text offers only a portion. Spivak, on the other hand talks about the reader/translator's liberty to 'fray' the language, but that attempt is resisted by the rhetoric of the text so that the liberty of the translator must ultimately produce naught and the original text will always emerge triumphant over any attempt to decipher it.

The problem with linguistic translation therefore, is that it can never reproduce the text and its meaning in its entirety because a text is not composed of the available linguistic resources alone but constitutes something greater than it.

At this point it does not seem illogical, running the risk of the purist's wrath, however to propose that when by all admission interlinguistic translations fail with certainty to capture the intentionality of the text, one can opt for, to use Roman Jakobson's words 'intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*' as the means of communication. This was the term that Jakobson used to indicate an interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign systems. This concept of transmutation is also known as adaptation. My argument for adaptation of a literary text into a non-verbal sign system as a valid translational practice gains its legitimacy from a discussion about adaptation by Susan Bassnett, who has this to say about this particular form of translation,

Some critics [suggest] that a translation is somehow more 'faithful' to the original than a version or an adaptation. The argument is based on the flawed premise that there *is* such a thing as a 'faithful' translation in the first place, an assumption called into question by Translation Studies. For all translations reflect the translator's interpretation of the source-text, so that a translation is basically the product firstly of a single individual's reading and of his or her second-language rewriting. Translation inevitably involves rewriting and manipulation of the source, as translators and theorists, from Dryden to Derrida have pointed out, and the act of translating always leads of changes.¹

When I argue for an intersemiotic translation as a more logical practice for certain kinds of texts, I have in mind a single medium, that is the cinema. The audio-visual nature of cinema, its technical aspect which has a greater power at times to symbolize and metaphorize, yet its ability to hide its highly technical process in the final product can in fact work as a very powerful translating medium.

The obvious limitations of film as a medium of translation however have to be kept in mind. A film unlike a linguistic translation must be an adaptation because of the nature of the medium. Secondly, if the original text is a longer one like a novel the film adaptation would involve a lot of selection and editing which in hands of a not-so-competent film director might introduce distortions outside the range of acceptable variations; thirdly, a film director has a lot more autonomy than the translator, and a good director becomes, if not a rival in terms of creativity, of the original author, certainly independent of him/her. Apart from that, the truly talented director who is better equipped to approximate the intention of the original author might, to use Venuti's term, 'domesticate' the text by transferring it to a different cultural milieu — the way Kurosawa had domesticated Shakespeare. Naturally in such an adaptation the dialogues of Shakespeare's play, sometimes its greatest asset, would be totally lost, but the spirit would survive strongly. All films, which follow literary texts 'faithfully' do just that — they capture the spirit. In fact, texts that depend primarily on the emotional apprehension of the reader, are better translated in film adaptations.

Bibhutibhushan, as I have discussed earlier is such an author. His texts have been made into good and great, emotionally appealing films, like Ray's *Apu* trilogy based on *Pather Panchali* and its sequel *Aparajito*, *Asani Sanket* based on the novel with the same title, and Tarun Majumdar's *Nimantran* adapted from Bibhutibhushan's *Arandhaner Nimantran*. But his linguistic translations are fewer in number. *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito* were translated after the success of their film versions, and recently there have been scattered translations of his novels like *Aranyak* and some short stories. But his linguistic translations in spite of the expertise of the translators miss that particular element which is his strength — the emotion — completely, because it hides in images which language fails to give shape to, a particular tone of speech or turn of an idiom — impossible to recreate in a linguistic translation. But images are sometimes better equipped to negotiate that complexity particularly when they are aided by speech in a film. Cinema and its unique language therefore realize the concept of the 'pure, universal language' of Benjamin not purely at the linguistic level, but in a more holistic manner, in a deeper search for the 'textual intention' by trying to resolve the dichotomy of thought and expression, concreteness of language and abstractness of image.

The other thing that really matters is the fitness of the material to be translated. The major sensuous elements in Bibhutibhushan's works are un-translatable in the English language, but translatable in a primarily visual medium like cinema. The images used in the film version of *Pather Panchali* like the rain, the train, the meadow full of *kash* flowers, the play of light and shadow are able to capture the spirit of the book and the environment a thousand times more effectively than any linguistic translation would have. A particularly effective sequence would occur to whoever has watched the film version and read the novel too, where after the Roy family abandon the ancestral house in the village a snake is shown entering the deserted house. This one image brings together for the viewer the different emotions that the departure of the family in the text evokes in the reader — a feeling of emptiness at the finality of their departure, awe at the merciless establishment of the claim of nature, which has always been in the background, silent but potent, and grief at the sign that the ruined house can never be a home again. The text looks at the whole episode from Harihar, the father's point of view,

He was very uneasy. Was he doing the right thing? His ancestors had lived on that piece of land. He thought of the deserted compound next door, and how its glory had departed. Would the jungle swallow this house too? The evening-lamp had burned there for years; but tonight no one would light it and all the rooms will be dark.⁹

In fact the author shows Harihar's sense of loss as greater than Apu's because the young boy is always looking forward into the future, as Bibhutibhushan would later comment, like a sunflower with his face always turned toward the sun. Yet all his life he would search for the idyllic existence of Nischindipur when his sister had been alive. The analysis of the tension between Apu's attraction for the new and the exotic, and his subconscious search for his childhood paradise is spread over *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito*, the two separate parts of Bibhutibhushan's narrative, but Ray by objectifying the departure sequence through the image of the snake has also unified the broken feelings of Apu. Ray here seems to have better gauged the intention of the author, than a linguistic translator, because the image comes out as a very potent one too, linking it with the future of Apu — as even when in *Aparajito* the novel, the mature Apu comes back to Nischindipur for a visit, his family house remains inaccessible to him,

the jungle having swallowed it up. 'This is just one example where *Pather Panchali* the film and *Pather Panchali* the novel find perfect equivalence in each other.

I will just mention another very effective scene from *Aparajito* — the death of Sarbajaya :

She developed: a sharp, piercing pain in her chest that afternoon [...] Sarbajaya was alone once more, in her empty little house. She could feel her temperature rising.

Soon, it was dark. The moon rose, large and nearly full ... it would be a full moon in just two days. For the first time in her life Sarbajaya felt afraid to be alone. As the night grew darker, she began to feel breathless, as if she had dropped to the bottom of a lake and couldn't get out again. Choking and perspiring profusely, she tried to sit up, forcing herself to take a few deep breaths. Now she felt absolutely terrified. What was happening to her? Was she going to die? Was this how death came?

[...] the earth glowed in the moonlight. There was only one person she could think of ... Apu ... Apu ... how could she leave him? It was impossible! Now, to her astonishment, she realized she had been crying all the while without knowing it. Why, her pillow was wet with tears! ¹⁹

The description of Sarbajaya's death is a long one — occupying almost two and a half pages in Gopa Majumdar's translation. The narrative is a mélange of stream-of-consciousness and third person narratives. This description in the film is reduced to a single sequence — with Sarbajaya, lonely and delirious with fever leaning against a tree trunk, looking wistfully at the path along which Apu has departed, unable and also unwilling to go inside the house for fear that she'd miss seeing her son arrive if he at all does, the evening growing darker with a million fireflies dancing around. The scene is short, intense and vivid and without any sound, musical or otherwise.

In the two novels there are several deaths — Apu in fact loses his aunt, sister, father, mother and wife in the course of the novels. But Sarbajaya's death perhaps is the one that Bibhutibhusan treated most elaborately, which is significant because she was apparently the most prosaic of the persons who had formative influences on Apu's life. In the novels Sarbajaya is shown devoid of imagination and the heightened awareness of the beauty of nature unlike her husband, daughter or son

— but what lends poetry to her character is her intense and all consuming love for her son. The lives of the other people who die in the novels are enriched by their imagination, but for Sarbajaya imagination has full play only at the moment of her death,

Death had come to fetch her. Death was standing at her door, but it had come in the guise of her child, to embrace her with love, to lift her with infinite tenderness ... what a sweet smile it had ... death was so utterly beautiful! ¹¹

Bibhutibhushan was very careful to maintain a distinction between the verbal and cognitive expressions of Sarbajaya and the other characters of his novel. Sarbajaya is always practical and grounded, never given to flights of imagination or poetic fancy. Her experience of death as well as its description in the formal language that Bibhutibhushan uses are in contrast to the portrayal of Sarbajaya in the rest of the narrative. The translations however are not able to distinguish between the subtle linguistic nuances pertaining to Sarbajaya's regular life and the moment of revelation. The film sequence on the other hand brings out the essence of the episode by focusing on the inactive Sarbajaya — itself a rarity, as Sarbajaya otherwise is always shown busy with household chores, — with eyes glued to the path taken by Apu.

What is important to remember here — is that it has been argued that the basic linearity of Bibhutibhushan's narratives works in favour of the film adaptations, but even in such a complex episode like Sarbajaya's death where the narrative is digressive and language devoid of direct visual correspondence, the 'essentialization' of the idea in visual terms can capture the moment more effectively.

Ray himself insisted that "if a novel or short story is to be adapted into a film it may be necessary to make certain changes to it in the interest of the art of cinema" ¹², thereby problematizing the already complex question of fidelity to the text, Dudley Andrew the famous film critic makes it clear that there is a difference between films adapted from literary texts and those of other kinds,

The 'distinctive feature' of adaptation is the matching of the cinematic sign system to a priori achievement in some other system [...] Every representational film adopts a priori conception [...] Adaptation delimits representation by insisting on the cultural status of the mode [so] in a strong sense adaptation is the appropriation of a meaning from a prior text. ¹³

He however warns that, adaptations might lead to "effacement of memory derived from the novel by an audio-visual-verbal one [...] which will seem to jar with the collective memory."¹⁴ This also obviously initiates a great multiplicity of responses to the original conceptual expression at a perceptual level.

Adaptation of a literary text therefore, like all translations is an act of representation. Though the question of fidelity is a badly flogged horse, an adaptation has to acknowledge that it enjoys limited freedom in terms of creative expression and embodies a convergence of arts, with the original text always remaining the chief resource. Roy commented on *Pather Panchali*:

I chose *Pather Panchali* for the qualities that made it a great book : its humanism, its lyricism, and its ring of truth [...] at the same time I felt that to cast the thing into a mould of cut and dried narrative would be wrong. The script had to retain some of the rambling quality of the novel, because that it itself contained a clue to the feel of authenticity : life in a poor Bengali village does ramble.¹⁵

This observation is an interesting one as it throws light on the concept of film adaptation as translation, revealing the film director as a reader, an interpreter not only linguistic but cultural, and lastly a film maker — the same phases that an interlinguistic translator would go through.

The intersemiotic translation however does not always yield such happy results like the *Apu* trilogy, even when there is the same combination of author, textual ambience and film maker. Ray's *Asani Sanket* adapted from Bibhutibhushan's novel could not repeat the success of his earlier venture. The reason might be that it deviated a little too far from the original text if not in spirit but certainly in details — which is a failure, for in Bibhutibhushan the small details are 'essential' for the spirit of the novel. The matronly *Ananga-bou* of the novel, the mother of two sons carrying yet another child gets transformed into a pretty, newly married wife in the film thereby simplifying the equation of the relationship to a great extent, but the romance that in Bibhutibhushan existed in the very domesticity, the attraction between the couple that survived the mundane existence threatened by the spectre of looming famine went, missing. This is a single instance of what went wrong with *Asani Sanket* the film, but to me as a reader of the original novel this was a major flaw. This response on my part I would imagine represents the discomfort of the vernacular reader who cannot take the

translation of such a classic text as Bibhutibhushan's as an independent work, but is forced to compare the response elicited by the original text with the interpretation of the film. In such a case there is very little difference between responses to the interlinguistic and intersemiotic translations because ultimately the expectation remains that they both must 'represent' the text.

NOTES :

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3. Translator's Note. *Aparajito*. Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. Trans. Gopa Majumdar. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2003 p. xviii.
4. Benjamin, Walter, *The Task of the Translator*. Trans. James Hynd and E. M. Valk. Delos, 2, 1968, pp. 76-96.
5. Ibid.
6. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "The Politics of Translation" in *Outside the Teaching Machine*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
7. Benjamin, Walter, *The Task of the Translator*.
8. Bassnett, Susan, "Theatre and Opera" in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. Peter France Oxford: OUP, 2000.
9. Banerji, Bibhutibhushan. *Pather Panchali*. Trans. T. W. Clarke and Tarapada Mukherji. London George Allen and Unwin, 1968. p. 298.
10. Bandyopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan. *Aparajito*, pp. 164-166.
11. Ibid, pp. 166-167.
12. Ray, Satyajit. "A Critic in the Eyes of a Director" in *Speaking of Films* Penguin, 2005, p. 133.
13. Andrew, Dudley. "Narrative Strategies" in *The Well-Work Muse : Adaptation in Film History and Theory*, eds. Sydney Conger and Janice R. Welsch. West Illinois University Press, Macomb Ill. 1981, pp. 9-10.
14. Ibid.
15. Ray, Satyajit. *Our Films, Their Films*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2001, p. 33.

TRANSLATION AS INTERMEDIARY: A SHORT NOTE

(1)

I will begin with certain questions regarding translation, the translator's subjectivity and how that filters through the textual practice. As a translator, these are some of my personal questions that I wish to address in this paper. The anxieties of translation are closely allied to these queries. My primary objective is to demystify some of the socioemotional taboo associated with the process of translation and the role of the translator. I would like to see translation as a way of channeling ideology through which the 'docile bodies' communicate.

Most of us are monolingual or bilingual, or at the most trilingual. But there are about five to ten thousand languages in this world. In India itself there are about 216 languages including those recognized by the State. The literary comparatist is expected to work with more than one language and has to face the challenge of showing mastery in multiple languages. But it is an impossible task in a multilingual country like India. Without Sahitya Akademi and National Book Trust we could not have accessed *Bhasha* literatures (literary works in various Indian Languages) in Bangla and vice versa. Even if we look at the diverse cultural expressions of the world, translation is probably the most effective way of facilitating cultural exchanges, where literary exchange is only a part of these transactions. I shall concentrate on the literary transactions for this essay. As we are aware translations do not merely break the barrier of language, but do more.

The act of translation is that particular moment when two literary systems interact and negotiate. Translation is thus a process. It has its own poetics. It starts with the complex act of selection which is guided by a definite politics. The study of this complex politics of translation practice is inevitably a study of power relationship which is not restricted

to the dynamics of the two languages (ST and TT), but goes beyond that. It begins much before at the level of selection, which exposes the power dynamics of textual practice within the wider cultural context. I shall definitely not concentrate on the age old model of value judgment which looks at translation in relation to the original. When I talk about selection, it is a matter of choice also. I would like to contest the model which highlights the translator as a passive subject by addressing her/his peculiar agonies associated with her/his secondary world. Later theoretical developments have already questioned the authority of not only the 'original' but also the 'authorship' of the original text. Secondly, the purpose of this paper is to highlight certain emerging trends in translation practice and reevaluate the 'task' assigned to the translator. I would rather like to approach translation as a cyclical process of revisiting critical awareness, a process of struggle against oppression, a call for liberation as compared to 'task'. Since there is no absolute meaning, no uncontested original, the act of translation is a transformation within and without the textual practice. It can be as simple and as critical as freedom from a form (a genre can also be a kind of imposition, a kind of closure, a kind of order). We can cite examples from world literature to show how translated texts have erased the barriers of genres as well.

Once a text is translated, it enters the literary consciousness to be translated again and again. It does not have a definite meaning, since the 'original' does not. Translation is thus a process. It participates in the process of textual negotiation. The translator is the most faithful reader who participates in the unfolding pattern of the process of decoding the 'text'.

At this point I would like to draw the attention of my *intended* readers (who shall participate in this textual negotiation also) to stop at this juncture, and take into account that in today's market driven world, the very idea of translation as a 'process' or translation as an ongoing negotiation, can actually be quite problematic, often a luxury, and definitely a discrete charm for academicians. With the IT boom, translation of 'text on screen' has become an intrinsic part for instructional designs. It is important to remember that we cannot ignore this corpus of writing as mere instructional texts. Translation of 'user manuals' is a big industry. Manuals have their own logistics of dissemination of knowledge. The translator is not only transferring the information. In the process the instructional writer mediates between the product and the intended reader, who is the consumer. The translated literature

manufactures a desire within the consumer to revisit the 'text' and finally buy the product. Hence it is important to consider in depth the relationship of translating knowledge, or to be more specific, the production of knowledge through translation in a given culture and the way it is interpreted, reinterpreted, transmitted, and relocated in that target consumer culture. The significance of these 'texts' lies in the fact that they gradually enter the literary system. I would call them necessary intermediaries. Another category can be machine translation. But the scope of this essay would not allow me to discuss it here.

The National Translation Mission has also identified certain 'non-artistic' texts as 'knowledge texts' for specific target audiences where again translation is definitely not a process but an end in itself — the translated text being the final product. Here the expected task of the translator is to transfer information as accurately as possible. Though that again is an oversimplification.

Now, if we consider the essential function of translation to be performing the role of intermediaries, then should we make a clear distinction between 'knowledge texts' and 'artistic texts' for our own benefit? For our convenience let us agree that the role of the intermediary (here the translated 'text') is directly related with the recipient, then the subjectivity of the translator depends on the target reader/recipient also. The translator of a text on screen or a user manual and the translator of an 'imaginative text' or polemic is different. But the individual behind the process might be the same individual who juggles between the two extremes. Here the process of selection becomes important - who, and under what circumstances, translates a text or is assigned to do so. So when I say translation as intermediary, it is not just the final product that I am talking about. I would like to consider the role of the 'text', the 'translator', and the 'intended reader' in the textual negotiation. All of them perform the role of the intermediary at various levels of translation practice.

(2)

I had this rare opportunity to witness the anxiety of a publisher who had four volumes of translation ready for the market and was clueless about whom to approach for distribution! Will they allow us to display a copy in their store? The question came from a seasoned academician, a translator herself, an editor, a publisher.

One has to admit that the 'anxiety' with which I began was absolutely justified as the genre in question for the volumes of translation was 'lyric' as well as a volume of prose poems. And above all the volumes were '*tarjuma*'— a word, derived from Arabic *tarzumah*, often used in Bangla to connote the act of translation. 'Tarjama' is also the name of the publisher, dedicated to the job of bringing out bilingual editions of translations from Kolkata. Yes, the place matters, and so does the time. The translated volumes comprised translation of poems by the renowned Pakistani poet Afzal Ahmed Syed (from Urdu to Bangla), prose poems by Peter Bisschel (from German to English), poems by Nicolas Guillen (from Spanish to English) and selected lyrics of Silvio Rodriguez (from Spanish to English). Bringing out bilingual editions can be fruitful in addressing certain pertinent issues related to translating poetry, one of them being the look and feel of the poem. Apart from that, it is a positive move towards acceptability and to a certain extent an attempt to address issues associated with authenticity. Bilingual volumes allow the reader with adequate knowledge of both the languages (source and target) to go back to the original and vice versa. But why would a reader, well-equipped to read the source language text, even look for translation? Does a bilingual volume of translation promote language consciousness amongst us? To put it in a simple way, bilingual editions create an urge within us to approach the original text. The translated text then becomes a mediator. Giving access to the original means taking up the challenge of contesting the authority of the 'original'. The translated text and the 'original' cohabit the space of textual negotiation at the same time. A new text enters the literary system. It negotiates with the existing 'original' text and other existing translation/s of the original. In this complex process the text gains an identity, a characteristic of its own and the fate of the 'text' is decided. One has to remember that in a multilingual country like India, this process of negotiation can be very complex. To a certain extent, the reverse process of 'locating' the original text might become extremely cumbersome. I shall come to this point later and emphasize the importance of creating a common pool or database for existing translated works from and into various *Bhasha* literatures in India as well as from and into European languages other than English. But that would be from the perspective of translation and pedagogy. I would like to show later how translation can also work as an intermediary in pedagogy, though my primary intention is to talk about translation as a process.

Translating from and into English has always been a distinct power game because it was not restricted to artistic literature, but included government papers and documents as well. I feel that translating into English language in India is no longer a process of translating into the language of the colonizer. English is, today, very much a part of our own literary system. The point to note is the way we use translation or view translation practice. Attitudes might differ. Sunil Gangopadhyay in a recent interview expressed his desire that his texts should be translated for a pan-Indian acceptance. On the other hand, Suchitra Bhattacharya admits that since she has identified a specific target reader, and since her writings cater to a specific age group in the *mufasssil*, she does not feel any strong need or urge to get her novels translated. It is a rare opportunity to translate a text when the author is alive. It should, however, be pointed out that we have ample proof in world literature to show that authors themselves have translated their texts (at times failed) or they have at least participated in the process of translation. Translations have always bridged gaps between readers. One cannot ignore the fact that a translated volume of Namdeo Dhasal (be it in any other *bhasha* literature or in English) which is published in the spirit of a democratic attitude towards the plight of the subaltern, can convey a message or opinion about resistance narrative to both Dalit writers as well as non-Dalits in the field of aesthetics or social questions. Such instances of intermediary functions of translation can be found in every national literature. Translation of foreign texts can also create similar serious impacts on readership. According to Durisin:

A special form of intermediation is the translation of works of art, both native and foreign. The study of the conception of translation and its function in the interliterary process forms a significant section of comparative literary study... (Durisin 126)

If we consider the very nature of comparative literary research in India, we shall be able to show that the most important and at the same time the most complicated intermediary transmission, as far as interliterary exchange of values in the work of literature is concerned, has been via translated texts. It is either through translation of texts of Indian origin or from another literature. The act of translation is the most complicated because in contrast with the 'original' work which has a distinct purpose, the translator, who to a greater extent is the closest reader, tries to perform

either according to the purpose/s of the original work or tries to achieve something beyond it. Here I would like to point out that the 'original' work of literature can also perform as the intermediary of the values in its own native literary system. It can translate ideas and values from other existing systems. But a literal translation of that 'original' work enters another literary system through the subjective "filter" of the translator. This, in itself is a complicated process because this process consists not only of the artistic negotiation with the peculiarity of the 'original' author, which is to be encountered in the course of translation, but also of the inner struggle of the recipient author, the translator, as well as the structure of the intermediary, that is the literary genre.

(3)

Going back to the 'anxiety' quotient (as a student of comparative literature I cannot do away with it) with which I began, we should admit that translation of poetry is considered less profitable than fiction because there are hardly any takers in this prosaic age — poetry is apparently a luxury for most people, though even a couple of years ago almost every second person claimed to be a poet especially in a land like ours. This means that in post-economic liberation, it is not only the emergent new class, but even people who claim to be poets themselves do not read the works of other poets. So being aware of the loss they were anyway going to incur in the course of creating readership, the publishers (*Tarjuma*) still undertook the journey because they believed that it was their responsibility to open avenues and create a new chat room where ideas could be exchanged at a time when we were getting more and more bottled up even in terms of literary systems.

In this context I would like to refer to the introduction of *Kede Neoa Itihas*, a translation of Pakistani poet Afzal Ahmed Syed's poems by Nilanjan Hazra. I shall use this introduction to illustrate the politics of selection. Why is a text at all being translated? What is the impact of a translated text? How does it shape readership (or should I say 'recipient author' à la Durisin) and consequent literary production?

To begin with, Syed's poetry is different in essence from what we understand by Urdu poetry in India. But one has to remember that though it is quite distinct in its flavour and essence as compared to the '*Andaze Bayan*' of Mirza Ghalib, the shift in the tone has been a journey where

we shall encounter Manto's *Tobatek Singh* and other major literary works. Manto's testimonial exposes the dangers of separatist politics which soured the relationship between India and Pakistan. The other Pakistani who possibly exposed this nefarious politics was Faiz. Two conflicting nations could forget the external disharmony by tuning into Mehdi Hasan's rendering of :

*Gulon mein rang bharein, baad –e-nao-bahar chalein
Chale bhi ao ke gulshanka karoban chalein*

*(Flowers are brimming with colour, in the midst of the new wave in spring,
Come you too... so that the flower garden can continue its business.)*

Hazra in his introduction to his ambitious volume suggests the impossible task of translating the *bhi* in the second line. This *bhi* is the *tagjju*, the twist. Now my point is not to comment on 'translatability' of the ghazals as I am not an expert in the source language. But what I would like to establish is that a literary event like the publication of a translated volume of Urdu poetry from Pakistan is a unique study in reception. It is definitely not an isolated instance. A single literary event can shape the course of literary production of a particular age and influence generations of authors. Hazra has rightly pointed out the impact of the formation of the 'All India Progressive Writers Association' (PWA) in 1935. The formation of this association has a history which possibly started with the publication of 'Angare' in 1932. But according to me, what is most striking in this case was the publication of an essay in *The Leader* which defended the strong protest 'Angare' had received from various quarters. I quote from the essay as published in Hazra's introduction:

Our practical purpose is the formation immediately of a league of progressive authors, which should bring forth similar collections from time to time, both in English and the various vernaculars of country.
(Hazra 14)

On returning to India, Sajjad, the convener of the meeting of 1934 (which led to the formation of PWA), distributed the draft to distinguished authors. Premchand himself took initiative and translated the draft and published it in 'Hans'. Hazra has rightly commented that this marks the beginning of a new era in the literary history of the subcontinent. Faiz got involved consequently and we all know the later part of the story. The year Faiz passed away, Syed came with his '*Chhini hui tarikh*'. It also marked the end of conventional Urdu love lyrics. For the disillusioned self, poetry

is no more an escape. It is a manifesto. At times poetry even becomes propaganda. The world of poetry is a void which only breeds insecurity. So Hazra has rightly analysed that contemporary Indian Urdu poetry is quite different from Urdu poetry in Pakistan in its essence, especially in its usage (the flavour of the language). Modernism is a fashion in contemporary Urdu poetry in India. Gradually the function of Urdu is being delimited to occasional 'Ishque' and 'Muhabbat'. The greatest postmodern spoof of this trend is the number 'Dard-e-disko' from a latest Hindi cinema. That 'Inquilaab' was also part of this lexical praxis, is a thought which has been technically obliterated and sent to the backyards of cultural amnesia. It has failed to absorb the essence of modernism from within. Thus a translated volume of contemporary Urdu poem from Pakistan can, in fact, initiate a process of literary transaction across the border and initiate an effort to look at the function of the language afresh. Working as an intermediary, translation of literary works from both the sides might strive to address 'anxieties' pertaining to democracy across the border:

Itihash jodi astra sastrer ekta brochure hoy tahole hoyto amra chilam-i na	[If History is a brochure of armaments maybe then we were not there
Hoyto amra sei deshei janmai ni jar naam bodle gecche	Maybe we were not born in that country whose name has been changed
Hoyto amra sei barite thaki na jar bhara dewar janya amader pitripurush o amader ek bela khawa chere dite hoyechhe	Maybe we do not reside in that home paying rent for which has led our forefathers and us to sacrifice a meal
Amra hoyto sei saab protisthane talimo nei ni Dan-dhyan kora mahan manushder atma ke puroshkrito karar janya ja jwaliye dewa hoyechhilo (Kede Nawa Itihash, 2010)	Maybe we were not trained in those institutions which, to reward the great generous souls were burnt down.]

Hazra also points out the shift from—

Ishque se tabiyaatne jistka maaza paya
Dardki dawa payi, dard-e-bedawa paye (Ghalib)
[The soul relishes the essence of life in love
The pang got cured, only to be renewed by indefatigable spasm.]

to

Muhabbat koi numaiya nishan nehi
Jisse laash ki sanukhti mein asaani ho (Afzal Ahmed Syed)
[Love is not a visible mark through which a corpse can be easily
identified.]

In her introduction to *Let the Guitar Raise Her Hand*, a bilingual collection of translation of selected lyrics of Silvio Rodriguez, Kaushalya Bannerji writes:

In the following pages I have tried to do justice to the feelings and images evoked by these popular songs of Silvio Rodriguez. It was hard to narrow down the selections of the original Spanish lyrics, and the resulting collection symbolizes only a portion of his prolific song writing. I discovered the translator's painful dilemma between utilizing a literal or an evocative approach. I have opted for the latter as much as possible because the power of Silvio's writing lies in his carefully crafted lyrics, his offer of commitment to both art and struggle. As the quintessential emblem of a tiny island nation that has taught us *another world is possible*, the music of the Nueva Trova, and of Silvio Rodriguez in particular, manifests a cultural component that I inextricably linked to the Cuban revolution.

His lyrics certainly destabilize notions of knee-jerk propaganda and commanded cultural production which have typified anti-communist cultural discourse. Most importantly, they also reflect on important political and cultural moments in creating history of self-conscious (in Marxist terms) intellectual production. Unlike the Beatles or other mass-produced cultural influences, practitioners of Nueva Trova had some very clear ideas about the role of intellectual and cultural producers in the work of revolutionary reconstruction and building socialism... (Bannerji, xviii)

Bannerji admits that her passion for Third World liberation and cultural solidarity, which she considers as her inheritance, provided her the impetus and the desire to introduce the work of Rodriguez to a non Spanish speaking audience. The contemporaneity of the translated volume and Rodriguez's lyric lies in the fact that the lyrics evoke a culture of resistance and hope in a world torn apart by regionalism and petty nationalism.

Gun Against Gun

The mountain's silence prepares us
for a good bye.
The word that will be said *in memoriam*
will be the explosion.

The man of this century is lost there,
his first and last names are: gun against gun.

The shell of the wind to the south has broken
and on the first cross truth awakens.

All the third world
goes to bury its sorrow,
with a hailstone of lead makes
a hole of honour, its song.

They will leave the body of life there,
its first and last names are: gun against gun.
They will sound the lute, both human and animal
and instead of tears, lead will drip from their eyes.
Man will arise from the grave to the sun
and his name will ring out: gun against gun.

(Rodriguez, 1968)

I am deliberately not referring to the other translated volumes I mentioned earlier. The scope of this essay will not permit me to provide more instances. But I hope that I have been able to substantiate what I proposed in the beginning. Nothing is haphazard at certain moments

in history. A selection of texts to be translated has its own dynamics and there is a definite politics behind the process of selection. Translation can also be seen as an intervention in this case. It can be seen as the reconstruction of laws of literatures which has the impetus to move beyond the confines of the 'organic literary-historical unit' (Durisin: 1984, 12) of the national to the broader laws governing world literature.

(4)

Now having a 'translation consciousness' and being a part of 'translation culture' à la Lakshmi Holmstrom, I completely agree that the notion of what translation 'is' and 'does' seems to have changed over time. In the colonial era, Indian texts were being translated into English; the German orientalist were translating Indian texts into German. On the other hand, popular texts in other European languages were being translated into Indian languages as well. Rabindranath's adaptation and translation of poems from various European languages is supposed to be the marker of 'modernity' in mainstream Indian Literature. This is a unique case study of reception and scholarly works which are being done in this field of '*Rupantar*' — a word which by itself adds a new dimension to literary translation in India. From pre-colonial to colonial and then onwards into this neo-colonial time, what has plagued the translation industry is 'fidelity to the original', 'adaptations', 'translatability', 'transcreation' etc and now 'translation as an industry' — which is becoming almost as big as the industry which produces 'originals'. I am not going into the debate whether it is a discipline in itself. For my convenience, apart from the 'literariness' of the concept of translation which I have already dealt with, I shall also consider translation as an industry and try to highlight certain trends in the production of translated texts and thereby expose the politics of selection which I have already mentioned. Though I have clearly identified my objectives, I shall enter into the disciplinary approach to translation per se in order to substantiate what I shall propose hereafter.

Many universities now take literatures in translation seriously and encourage comparative studies of texts from different languages, devising a number of courses which use literatures in translation or which include a unit in translation theory or practice. This may not always be a good thing, as courses have to rely on what is available.

and translation from the different languages has tended to be haphazard and often uneven. Some of the regional languages have been better served than others, and even where a substantial body of translation exists, there are no existing catalogues or lists which evaluate what is available, and point to the gaps. (Holmstrom, 35-36)

What I would propose here is what Holmstrom calls 'haphazard' and 'often uneven' is the dynamics of translation practice. I would also like to address the issue that 'some of the regional languages have been better served than others', and that is precisely what I meant by 'the politics of selection'. As far as cataloguing is concerned, I shall cite examples from the already existing database of Anukriti.net, a translation database which provides a unique model for researchers who are working in the field of translation study in India. I would also like to identify areas where adequate research can be undertaken to establish the interliterary relationship and affinities. Any attempt to systematically read this process of interliterary relation should fall under the purview of reception studies. According to Durisin:

The inclusion of the translation in the sphere of interliterary relationships does not deprive us of the possibility of evaluating it with regard to its complete function, which comes into prominence in evaluating the selection, as well as with regard to the character of its individual elements, which we can arrive at primarily in evaluating the translator's procedures and conception. Thus depending on the results of analysis, we can place the translation either in the sphere of external contacts or internal contacts, while further possibilities are opened up for more thorough evaluation of its effect in the interliterary process. (Durisin, 135)

In the year 2004, CIIL, Mysore undertook a mission to correct and augment the already existing pool of translation from and into Indian *Bhasha* literatures for preparing a database for their website Anukriti.net. While working as participants of the correction and augmentation programme we gradually realized that as we corrected and added new entries, we could actually build up a trajectory showing the changing trends of translation in the Indian literary scenario. At times it was difficult to locate the original because it was not mentioned in the translated version or the name had been changed. For instance, Rabindranath's *Chokher Bali* has been translated as *Ankh ki kirkiri* as well as *Binodini*. Now if we claim that apart from its function as an intermediary, translation also represents a highly characteristic and

significant form of interliterary reception, we also have to take into account the relationship of the translator along with other facts such as place and time. *Chokher Bali* was translated in Hindi as *Ankh ki kirkiri* by Roopnarayan Pandey in 1913 and published by Hindi Grantharatnakar Karyalaya, Bombay and the number of pages was 287. It again appeared as translated by Roopnarayan Pandey in 1916 and 1932 from Bombay. The number of pages was reduced from 287 to 255 in the 1932 edition. *Ankh ki Kirkiri*, translated by Hanskumar Tivari in Hindi was published by Sahitya Akademi in 1961. Ramanatha 'Sumana' translated *Chokher Bali* as *Ankh ki Kirkiri* in 1962 for Hind Pocket Books, Delhi, and the number of pages was 136. It was again translated in 1986 by Dhyanyakumar Jain for Hind Pocket Books, Delhi, and the number of pages was 195. We came across another translated volume from the same house which was published in 1985 with 141 pages. There are other editions also. I think there is a definite politics behind this existence of multiple volumes. It is not always as academic as Durisin mentions. I would definitely not label this coexistence of several volumes of translation as markers of inexactitude and displacements in translation because I personally find this profane space much more productive than the pure domain of the 'original' because specialists have been able to detect several versions of the 'original' texts of Rabindranath and Bankimchandra. What I would like to add here is that apart from the personality of the original author (which cannot be ignored in India) and translator, the market also plays an important role in the process of selection. The existence of several 'texts' of *Ankh ki kirkiri* cannot be taken as the direct outcome of individual interpretation of the translators. Again, it is not essentially determined by the market alone. If we consider the existence of various versions (in terms of translation) as shifts from the original then these shifts can become potential research areas where the shifts can be studied as a kind of evaluation of the original text in relation to other texts, including the translation of the original and of course the 'subjectivity' of the translator.

Literary scholarship can aim to treat each entry vis-à-vis translation as an event because each has its own politics of selection hinting at the creative process of reception. The intermediary function of translation and the poetics of selection can be seen as a specific form of interliterary reception in the recipient literature along with other non-literary intermediaries.

Keeping in mind the proliferation of terms and categories that reflect the diversity of the category called translation, what I have tried to establish in this essay is the politics of selection which, I think, defines the 'subjectivity' of the translator. Translation is a political act. Since there is no ultimate performance, the translator as a performing artist is alive and unwell as s/he has to continuously negotiate with her/his subjective position which is closely aligned with the tension s/he inherits from the 'text' s/he selects to translate. The various isomorphic moments in this essay (which deal with anxieties closely associated with meaning and what is meant) probably hint at the important aspect of translation as interpretation. Translation is thus not neutral and the translator is not a neutral observer.

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**"IT DIDN'T HAVE THE WORDS" ¹ — PROBLEMS OF
TRANSLATING POST-COLONIAL 'ENGLISH' TEXTS**

By definition, a translation is a re-presentation of an original text from one language to another as well as from one culture to another. However, these linguistic, cultural, and often temporal negotiations or exchanges do not take place neutrally; the very act of translation is automatically associated with authority, legitimacy, and eventually, power. Translation is, what Walter Benjamin terms as "...a mode. To comprehend it one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translatability."²

According to Benjamin himself, translatability is an essential quality of certain works. By this he means that there is a specific significance inherent in the original that manifests itself in its translatability³. Because, after all, translations are made by people who do not need them, but for people who cannot read the original⁴. But there are some originals which though written only once, have in their gestation, been the object of a process of translation. What becomes the task of the translator, then, who is required to translate such a text — is the translator supposed to detranslate the text first and embark on a re-translation? In this article I would like to draw attention to the problematics of translating certain texts, in particular post-colonial texts, written in English. To be precise, I am talking about the problems encountered while trying to translate certain Canadian texts from English to Bengali as part of a translation project undertaken by the Centre for Canadian Studies, Jadavpur University.

This peculiar problem comes up when a writer chooses to convey his/her thoughts and feelings in a language that is not his/her mother-tongue. And the choice is often deliberate. As Indian readers we

encountered it first in Indian-English writings and later in the English writings of the Indian diaspora. In the 'Introduction' to his book on Indian Writing in English, David McCutcheon had proposed a surface-and-depth model for this kind of writing. He had detected the presence of a "radically different" Indian mind underneath the surface of the English language. Thus according to him, this kind of writing is characterized by a constant and even creative tension between the medium, i.e. the language, and the content ⁵. For instance, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) was written in an English modified to South Indian conditions that reflect Kannada speech rhythms. And in his 1978 essay Rao had confessed that "to stretch the English idiom to suit my needs seemed heroic enough for my urgentmost demands." ⁶ Years later the same can be said of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) where she, too, mixes English with Kannada speech rhythms.

Any literary activity in a language other than the mother tongue elicits this process of translation while composing the original, which leads Christopher Rollason to comment that "it is already a case of translated literature in the sense that it is already the product of a transfer between, schematically, two cultural systems or polysystems, even before anyone translates the text into a third language." ⁷ And this process cannot guarantee a 'faithful' translation because after all it is a creative process; it is bound to result in a transcreation. Translations are supposed to maintain absolute fidelity to both the source and target languages while the essence of transcreation is to keep and transfer the cultural ethos as much as possible through the target language, indicating that the translator "must edit, reconcile and transmute" ⁸ the material he/she chooses to carry forward into another language. Thus, according to Dora Sales Salvador, "...such literature written originally in English [is] a sort of transcreation where [other] languages and cultural forms... survive, as a co-present substratum" at the intersection between "diverse linguistic and literary systems" ⁹. This means that English language-surface constitutes the visible stratum while the native thought-patterns remain as the sub-stratum with the language trying to express the world-view of the 'other' tongue which remains deliberately hidden behind English. But we need to determine why English, at all, is the chosen language and why does the need for such transcreations arise.

This concept of appropriation of the oppressor's discourse and technology by the oppressed cultures is a post-modern phenomenon.¹⁰ The appropriations of English language as a vehicle of expression, or more precisely, a weapon for hitting back and making one's displeasure known produces a process that Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird call 'reinventing the enemy's language'¹¹. It is very common in the writings of Native American writers as well as Afro-American writers who translate their reality into a language that is suitable for the expression of their agony and oppression. Hence most post-colonial literature written in English exhibit this tendency of what Bhabha had called "hybridity"¹², that is using this mixed language as a tool for subverting colonialism. In this light I would like to analyse the writings of Shani Mootoo and Makeda Silvera, two Canadian writers of 'other' origin who use English as their means of communication. Mootoo and Silvera are two such authors whose texts have been chosen for translation under the project mentioned earlier. As one embarks on the mission of translating their texts, one finds that their English is already a translated language, a language that has been modified to express their reality. Translations have always been teleological with the aim of being intelligible to the receptor reader. In Mootoo's and Makeda's cases, the language renders itself unintelligible, since it is both the source and the target language. Language is the repository of inherited values, belief systems and modes of experience and sensibility, and post-colonial diasporic writers deliberately try to subvert the inherited values and modes by introducing certain native words within an English sentence. Translations are often seen as violations, and those texts which are originally violations of the language in which they are written, make the problem of translatability even greater.

Let us take Makeda Silvera's example first. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Silvera moved to Canada with her parents at the age of thirteen. With her first collection of short fiction, *Remembering G* (1991), Silvera had found her "own Caribbean voice and with it, the language that spoke for me."¹³ And this language was a curious mixture of standard and non-standard English. For example, the first story of the collection, 'No Beating Like Dis One', uses two kinds of English — the normal one for general sentences, and pidgin English for direct speeches —

Mama knew I visited him sometimes but certainly not as often as twice a week. If she'd known I visited him to beg bus fare, she would have beat the living daylight out of me. It happened before : "From de day dat man walk out, he never even try to find out fi ah have nuff to feed you. Never ask about money if school uniform and yuh gone to beg him trulence, gal?"¹⁴

The rest of the eleven stories of the collection have this in common, all direct speeches are in a language which is unintelligible to a reader of standard English. What is noteworthy is that *Remembering G* provides a glossary at the end of the book, something which is likely only in translations and not in original works. A statement at the end of the glossary says that — "This glossary contains Jamaican words and English words with non-standard usages as they appear in the text". Thus apart from 'deh', 'dem', 'dis', 'dere', 'den', etc. which can be translated as 'they', 'them', 'this', 'there', 'then' into English before translating them into a third language, words like 'duppy' (ghost), 'gizzarda' (sweet-cake), 'dasheen' (a ground provision) find their way within a sentence which contains mostly English words and try to follow the English language structure. Hence, trying to translate a Makeda Silvera text into any other language, for example, into any Indian language, would involve first translating the text into proper English and then into the desired language. As such it will involve three languages and two further processes of translation into English from Jamaican. Only certain words and phrases have been left untranslated into English. If that translation process is completed, the text will tend to lose its meaning. For instance, how do we bring out this distinction between the usage of Standard English in the indirect speech and the usage of distorted English in the direct speech in any Indian language? But it is essential to distinguish it in order to understand the spirit of the story. The same thing happens in her second collection, *Her Head a Village* (1994). She uses the Jamaican patois in the stories of *Her Head a Village*. Here the lingo is not restricted to the direct speech alone, but the entire text is in Jamaican English. 'Canada Sweet, Girl' begins with

Last night mi wake up from a bad dream, men dress up in uniforms dragging me through me through the streets of Toronto to di Strathcona Hotel. I find myself wash up in cold sweat, mi hands trembling, head hurting and mi screaming.¹⁵

What is noteworthy here is the inconsistency of the usage of distorted English words; in a single sentence 'the' is retained and also 'di' is used. Such inconsistencies are deliberate, making such sentences even more difficult to translate. For instance, in Bangla the sentence can be simply translated as

গত রাতে একটা দুঃখ দেখে আমার খুন ভেঙেছিল, উর্দু পর কয়েকজন লোক
আমায় টেনে ফিঁচড়ে নিয়ে যাচ্ছে টরেন্টোর রাস্তা দিয়ে স্ট্যাথাকোনা হোটেলের
দিকে। দেবলাম ঘামে ভিজ্ঞ ঠাণ্ডা হবে গেছি, হাত কাঁপছে আমার, যন্ত্রণার
মাথা ছিঁড়ে যাচ্ছে আর চিব্বরে করে চলেছি। "

This translation can afford to leave aside the problems of 'the' and 'di', 'me' and 'mi', leaving no trace of the fact that the original 'English' sentence was not in proper English. In this way the problem is well avoided but not addressed, and considerable nuances of the intended impact are missed out.

Silvera herself has stated in the context of writing 'Caribbean Chameleon' that "I was trying to tell the story in Standard English, and the characters would not have it. They were Jamaican. The woman was angry, and her anger could not be expressed in Standard English — it didn't have the words the story would not make sense unless I wrote it in patwah" ¹⁷ But this stands as the explanation for the entire corpus of her writings. Her characters are Jamaican and their feelings, experiences and emotions cannot be expressed in Standard English. Thus when these Jamaican characters speak, they speak in their own language which has been translated into English from their native tongue. In the process if the target language has been distorted to an extent, it does not bother the writer/translator, for "all translations exert a violence on the object being translated because it tries to express an idea through a significant which is not really equivalent" ¹⁸ Standard English, as a language, proves to be an insufficient medium of expression. Hence, as the target language, it is suited and tailored according to the needs of the source language. Rather, English has to modify itself if it is to portray the reality of people who have suffered generations of colonization.

In Shani Mootoo another dimension is added to the already existing problems of power hierarchy in language and culture. Based in

Vancouver since 1981, Shani Mootoo is a Trinidadian with remote India connections. This diasporic sensibility of displacement lends to her language a strange hybridity that can be defined as a translation of the thought-processes of a confused mind. Such a mind has traveled between cultures and languages and could identify with none as its own. And this confusion is heightened because of altered notions of sexuality. Most of Mootoo's characters experience sexuality in a manner that is 'different' from others. Hence, it is natural that their way of expressing these 'different' experiences would vary from those of the 'normal' ones. So the standard language is unable to express the condition of her characters who deviate from the norm. Feminist critics have always argued that since the language at the disposal of a female writer is essentially patriarchal, and since she has to express female experiences in a patriarchal language, a woman writer's voice is bound to be fragmented.¹⁹ Shani Mootoo goes one step beyond with her fragmented language since her female voice refuses to comply with the norm of female sexuality. The appropriation of lesbian and bi-sexual voices within the patriarchal discourse of writing essentially involves an automatic translation of the voices and experiences which cannot be expressed in any single standard language. In *Impossible Desires*, Gayatri Gopinath talks about this hegemony of Euro-American understandings of same-sex desires, and how 'gay' and 'lesbian' identities are defined as oppositional.²⁰ The title story of Mootoo's 1993 collection of short-stories *Out on Main Street*, is narrated by one such character who "look like a gender dey forget to classify"²¹. The language the narrator uses in 'Out on Main Street' is also something like her - unclassified. Its a new literary decolonized space that allows accommodation to the dislocated and the fractured. Considering themselves to be "cultural bastards", the narrator goes on to say:

Yuh know, one time a fella from India who living up here call me a bastardized Indian because I didn't know Hindi. And now look at dis, nah! De thing is: all a we in Trinidad is cultural bastards, Janet, all a we. *Toutes bagailles!*²²

Like the English sentence, the French phrase is also distorted, making it clear that the narrator, who is a Canadian citizen, is not only

unable to speak English properly but even French remains inappropriate for her. She uses 'patois' which is 'substandard' French, and in patois the phrase is 'toute bagaille', it means 'everything' minus the extra 's'. Language is a cultural product; it is not only defined but also limited by the society. But Mootoo's characters face social ostracization every moment of their lives which cannot be expressed in socially-rooted conventional languages. Hence, her English, French, patois all present themselves in inappropriate forms —

I could see dey eyes watching Janet and me, dey face growing dark as dey imagining all kind a situation and position. And de women dem embarrass fuh so to watch me in mih eye, like dey afraid I will jump up and try to kiss dem, or make pass at dem.²³

Like her short-stories, her novel *Cereus Blooms at Night* (1998), too, transgresses syntactical conventions. In addition to that, her narrative structure is complicated with the presence of three narrators—one, an omnipotent third-person narrator; two, Tyler, the nurse, trapped in a male body who narrates in the first person, and three, in some places the narration is through Asha's letters and her voice becomes the narrational voice. These narrators interchange their places effortlessly and without prior warning to the reader. Further, Mootoo problematises the ability of the English language to reflect these diversities of sexual identities by placing side by side both male and female pronouns. For example, a series of he/she, him/her indicate the duality inherent in the body and persona of Ambrosia/Otoh, who has a female body with masculine inclinations—

Her arrival in the midst of one of his (her, then) parents' regular tirade profoundly affected all three...Elsie, hungry for a male in the house, went along with his (her) strong belief that he (she) was really and truly meant to be a boy. ~~She~~ fully expected that he (she) would outgrow the foolishness soon enough.²⁴

We must not forget that 'Otoh' is short for 'Otohboto', which means 'on the one hand but on the other'. Thus the simultaneous use of both the pronouns demonstrates the lack of flexibility in the language that is required to accommodate those who defy gender/sexual roles.

In other words, through her writings what Mootoo is actually trying to create is a "world freed of nomenclature, syntax and lexical form..."²⁵

In Bangla, Mootoo's world will be devoid of the option to confuse between genders because in translation the confusion between he/she will not arise. The single pronoun 'সে' and derived from it 'তার' will suffice for both male and female forms²⁶. The intention of the narrator was to confuse between 'he' and 'she' and harp on the duality, but this intention shall no longer hold where it is not possible to stress on the ineffectiveness of a language that is unable to accommodate both male and female forms without pronouncing them clearly. The same is the case with translating 'toutes bagaillies' which 'সবকিছু' when just left as (everything) fails to bring out the essence that there is something seriously wrong with the narrator.

This brings us back to the problem we began with — the problem of faithful representation of these texts into Bangla. Just as Standard English has been incapable of expressing the reality of the colonized, Standard Bangla, too, fails to bring about the accurate resonances into the target language. Then, is it necessary that in order to bring out the exact nuances, all forms of standardization will have to be abandoned and only a similar/hybridized target language will be able to come closest to representing a text written in a hybridized source language? The choice of English by certain post-colonial writers as the language for expressing their non-English realities has been intentional to point out the limitation and deficiency of the language. Using a non-conventional form of language to register protest is not new in Bangla too. For instance, several of Mahasweta Devi's texts use a form of language that incorporates the agony and anguish of the tribal people of India. Bangla herself has played the role of a colonizer in the context of other tribal languages, particularly Santhali. But in this case will the use of unorthodox Bangla register the intended protest or will it lead to heightened confusion among readers? One way to retain the flavor of the original writings may be the use of transliteration, i.e. keeping words like "duppy" intact in the translated versions and separately making notes of their Bangla meanings. The other option is to transcreate. Thus when Makeda says, "duppy life"²⁷, the sense in Bangla

is not the literal translation from English 'ghost life', 'ভূতুড়ে জীবন' but 'মরে বেঁচে থাকা' (death-like existence). And for Mootoo's writings, a hybridized Bangla and even retention of a few English words can bring out the intended effect required for the understanding of Shani Mootoo's 'languageless-ness'. Thus 'fuh so (meaning 'for so') can be translated as 'বহুত' (bahut) and 'tra-la-la'² as 'লারেল্লাপ্পা' (larelappa). The limitations of standardized languages need to be explored in the post-colonial era to subvert and create a language that can defy its own rules, at the same time creating new ones for the post-colonial reader.

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27. The words and phrases cited are from Makeda Silvera's short-story 'Canada Sweet, Girl'. Op.cit.
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JACQUES DERRIDA AND THE GIFT OF TRANSLATION

To the discerning reader, the texts organised around the proper noun 'Jacques Derrida' always show a certain consistency. Arguments tend to return, revisit. And yet, it is not always about sameness. The moment of recognition is without fail coupled with another, one that surprises, jolts, prohibits the reader, compels her to stop and step back, to rethink familiar movements, it frustrates and even stops her. Jacques Derrida's corpus entices the reader, Jacques Derrida's corpus forbids the reader. It promises and holds back meaning at the same breath. It both tempts and resists reading, interpretation, and thus translation. For our purpose, we have a fragment of that corpus in front of us: "Des tours de Babel" (1985) where Derrida 'reads' (he is himself the model diligent reader) Walter Benjamin's much read¹ 1923 introduction to a Baudelaire translation²: "The Task of the Translator", "What is a "Relevant" Translation?" (2001) and parts of *The ear of the other: otobiography, transference, translation* (1982) along with cues from some other texts, written by Derrida and others (Derrida cannot be the only signatory of the 'Derridian corpus'). The theme, translation. The point is to catch the threads showing consistency. But for reasons already mentioned, it might be worthwhile to see where to follow the recurring pulse of the arguments stretched over these texts, holding forth to its revealing moment, when the pulse is heard, felt, and passing over the interval when it threatens never to appear again. These bits/bites of stability would nevertheless be grouped under various broad movements. The 'who' and 'what' of it, as Derrida likes to pose a question³, the who and 'what' of translation in this case.

Who decrees translation

When we say Babel today, do we know what we are naming? Do we know whom? (Derrida : 2007, 191)

1. Central to Derrida's reading of Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" is the Biblical myth of the (unfinished) tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). We are reminded that the 'example' of Babel is important since it "can provide an epigraph for all discussions and translation" (Derrida: 1982, 100). The biblical myth is a story much told, and so it gives us a kind of complacency in its easy accessibility, "we think we know the story", that it can be retrieved from memory at will (is it not 'translation', re-appropriating the memory as proof of a past when I was present). "But", Derrida still insists, "it is always in our interest" that we re-read the story, and "closely" (Derrida : 1982, 100).

2. The sons of 'Shem', in desiring to build the tower, did not only aim at reaching the heavens, but also to force one single tongue/lip (in Hebrew the word for tongue is 'lip', Derrida: 2007, 193) on all men. A 'violent' imposition in itself. The project was *not* to invent an universal language to which all would have equal access (colonial promise, we might recognize), but to force a language on everybody by the virtue of being "the master with most force" (Derrida: 1982, 101, colonialism in action, at least in an unproblematic account of it), and through this to create a 'name' for themselves. God pays them back in kind, counters one violence with another ("no less necessary" Derrida would quip, Derrida: 1994), deconstructs the tower (it is deconstruction, we are told), and imposes his own name on the Shems and on the world.

3. Thus God, in imposing his own name, pits one proper name against another, disseminates the Shems over the face of earth by sowing 'confusion' (God's name also means, in an inadequate translation: 'confusion', a common noun). Like his counter-violence, God's command is 'double' as well. "Absolutely" so:

He imposes a double bind on them when he says: Translate me and what is more don't translate me. I desire that you translate me, that you translate the name I impose on you; and at the same time whatever you do, don't translate it. You will not be able to translate it. (Derrida: 1982, 102)

This double-bind (translate me/don't translate me) is 'at work', muses Derrida, in every proper name. Without translation, the proper name cannot ensure its survival, its continuity, cannot fulfill its craving for understanding (and love), but at the same time, it cannot but forbid full meaning, for as a proper name, it must hold on to its propriety and property, command respect, standing "over and above all languages" (Derrida: 1982, 102). This, according to Derrida, is also the basic structure of law. One is reminded of his reading of Franz Kafka's short story "Before the Law" (also part of *The Trial*, 1925) in his article of the same name (see Derrida: 1992). In that piece the logic of law is construed as a series of concentric layers each having an 'opening' that stands for the 'promise' part of the law. But, these doors are guarded closely by fearsome sentries personifying the forbiddance that law issues at the same gesture to the one who is 'before the law'. Translation operates with this general structure as well, being "necessary and impossible" (Derrida: 2007, 196). It becomes "the law, duty and debt, but the debt one can no longer discharge" (Derrida: 2007, 199).

4. God's imposition of his name "interrupts" the "linguistic imperialism" of the Shems, and being itself a "universal reason" it limits itself as well (Derrida: 2007, 199). Derrida insists on reading this act as deconstruction. Thus interestingly, here we have Derrida providing us with an uncharacteristically swift formulation of Deconstruction, he even tells us it's a "good idea of what deconstruction is": "an unfinished edifice whose half-completed structures are visible, letting one guess at the scaffolding behind them" (Derrida: 1982, 102-3). One is reminded of the Benjaminian 'arcade' that Derrida himself singles out in "Des tours". "Arcade" Benjamin tells us, has this advantage over a wall (as each 'word' does over each 'sentence') that it shows what's behind. One can peep through the arcade, the light passes through it letting one have a glimpse of the original, if one is meticulous enough that is (Derrida: 2007, 210). If one can "read between the lines" (Derrida: 1982, 103) then, i.e. the Benjaminian prescription for reading 'sacred texts' (which are otherwise untranslatable), and thus a model for all translations. *Babel as deconstruction* has this difference though, that here one can only get a glimpse of the 'ruin' behind, and not of any original structure. Here, i.e. the crucial Derridian break from Benjamin.

5. God's name must be (insufficiently) translated as 'confusion' (Shems would hear both God's indestructible name and a proper noun with a meaning), to make it understood, to proclaim the law: "He has not finished pleading for the translation of his name even as he forbids it. For Babel is untranslatable" (Derrida: 2007, 208). The proper noun belongs to language, it is *in language*, but it is also beyond it. To be beyond, it must (re-)claim its authority through translation. It craves this journey, to continue. It is a plea/command, it is poetic as well as sacred (Derrida opines, Benjamin tries to reach the latter through the former). The translator answers this call, gives into this impossible command to translate. He is 'in debt', he must face the 'aporia' of undecidability⁴. Still, it is not a contract between the translator and the text, insists Derrida with Benjamin, but between the 'original' and the 'translation', between texts that is. Like law (as this structure *is* the structure of law as such) it depends on its literalness, but needs transference as well, needs 'survival' (Benjamin's word for it is "*Ueberleben*" and Derrida reminds us, Benjamin uses another German word in the same breath, '*Fortleben*', therefore not only 'continuing life' but life 'after death'). This 'sur-vival' is not only of the text, but of languages and language in general. God ordains plurality of language, his proper name promises singularity.

6. The affinity among the languages, the very ground of translation proposed by Benjamin, does not posit any purified language, but a "pure language" ("*die reine Sprache*", Benjamin's term). The "co-deployment" of the languages "toward the whole" intends not to "transcend" language, but rather they desire for, "individually and together, in translation" something that is "tongue or language *as such*" (Derrida: 2007, 222). The "being language of language" (Derrida: 2007, 222 and Derrida: 1982, 124). One is "both able and unable to translate" by the very fact that languages do exist (Derrida: 1982, 124). We remember the Derridian formula here, stated at the very beginning of *Monolingualism of the Other or, The Prosthesis of Origin*:

1. *We only ever speak one language.*
2. *We never speak only one language.*⁵

One might feel at home in one particular tongue but still this double bind would quip at the same breath that one can never inhabit language (as such). Language in its universality is uninhabitable (God interrupted "universal reason"). The being of languages as well as, by logical

extension, of identities are always already *in translation*. What happens if we substitute 'language' with 'literature' here? And Derrida wants us to do as much, for he says, the 'promise' that there is one language which, in an abstract plane gives 'languages' a certain equivalence (impossible, for are they not irreducibly dissimilar?). i.e. precisely what decrees translation, authorises the "contract of the *to-be-translated*" also "defines the very essence of the literary and the sacred" (Derrida: 2007, 209). This is an 'anticipation' of a literature that is one, the one which makes many possible, and vice-versa, and underlines the impossibility of it. Like the 'sacred', the concept of an universal in 'literature' seems inevitable in conceptualizing the plurality of 'literatures' possible. But this relation also works the other way round, the 'universal' *needs* particulars, literatures to keep its validity as a reference frame. But, at the same breath it is also about the (im-)possibility of translation between two literatures, texts, indeed impossibility of the very relevance of the 'literary as such'. Precisely the opening that promises the possibility of a world literature in translation, and translation is also the sentry guarding that opening.

1. *We only ever write one literature.*
2. *We never write only one literature.*

On the tracks of a different ontology, but working with the same argument, we might investigate the status of a discipline that must rely on *literatures in translation*. How does the double bind work there, in the being of 'Comparative Literature'?

It has been repeatedly proposed against comparative literature that studying 'literatures in translation' cannot claim to be a serious reading practice, that this 'method' ignores the nuances of the 'original text' that gets irrecoverably lost in translation. But we must note here that contrary to the common notion, Comparative Literature does *not* simply assume a fluid transaction between literatures in translation. Rather it questions the very claim of one literature/text dwelling exclusively in one language. Therefore it is never 'one-to-one' comparison between two 'separate' literatures, for no literature can claim to have a closure constituted by a language. Instead, the literature-language relation is constituted by a fundamental disjunction, they are always already in translation. Comparative literature only underlines this fundamental homelessness of specific literatures and the (im-)possible promise of a

'literature as such'. *It is not a question of methodology*, rather it is a way of positing the universal and particular in literature.

What is translated

How would you translate a signature? (Derrida: 2007, 225)

1. In the Benjaminian scheme, the original contains an internal lack (coming from the double injunction). This lack "requires" translation even if "there is no translator fit to respond" (Derrida: 2007, 205). Therefore translation is internal to any text, and it is precisely this structural lack that makes the original incomplete, the original is in need of growth :

If the translator neither resituates nor copies an original, it is because the original lives on and transforms itself. [...] The transformation will be a moment in the growth of the original, which will complete itself in enlarging itself. (Derrida: 2007, 211).

2. Surprisingly enough, in reading the "Task", Derrida's motto is, do not theorise but translate! He wants to translate Benjamin's essay along with its French translation by Maurice Gandillac, to take on the 'task of the translator' in understanding the Babelian "performance", to experience translation: "translation is experience [...] experience is translation" (Derrida: 2007, 223). But what exactly is the status of this experience?

A note on 'experience': But we must note that here 'experience' is used in a very specific sense, as experience of 'remoteness' which, in its Heideggerian variation, signifies a very basic mode of being. Derrida in fact uses the German word '*Entfernung*' adjacent to the place from where we've just quoted. Moreover it is a quotation from Benjamin himself. The "sign of growth" he says following Benjamin, is contained in the (and he quotes from "Task") "knowledge of [...] distance" ", and then goes on to paraphrase quoting the German term from the original: "in the *Entfernung*, the remoteness that relates us to it" (Derrida: 2007, 223). In *Being and Time* (1926), talking about the spatiality of *Dasein* Martin Heidegger uses this term to mean a dual movement. To know its speciality, *Dasein* must first go through the double performance of bringing things closer in reverse, i.e. through

'distancing' them. This dual process is expressed through the single world '*Entfernung*' or 'deseverance' (literally de-distancing, reminds us of de-construction, Heidegger: 1962, 138). Likewise, the original must *de-severe* itself from its origin, get translated to experience growth.

3. *A cautious proposition:* Throughout his corpus, Derrida has dealt with the concept of truth chiefly in two registers. One is concerned with the truth as an ideal always already given, where each copy must try to achieve a perfect similarity with it necessarily failing in the endeavour⁶. In the other, the truth is rather a promise, and each copy is a fragment that goes into that gathering whole which would equal the promised unity at a point in future. This gathering follows the logic of complementarity and not that of simple addition. It is in this second order of 'presence' that Derrida seems to place Benjamin's scheme of translation. So translation is only a 'moment' in the "growth of the original". The 'original' grows, and grows as original for it was constituted at the origin by a desire to grow. We are given several indications of this structure in the "Des tours" :

a. "Growth must accomplish, fill, complete. [...] And if the original calls for a complement, it is because at the origin, *it was not there* without fail, full, complete, total, identical to itself" (stress mine, Derrida: 2007, 211; Derrida wants Benjamin's project only 'seems' Hegelian).

b. "As this growth comes also to complete [other than being dissemination of the law...] it does not reproduce; it adjoins in adding" (Derrida: 2007, 211).

c. "It extends the body of languages, it puts language into symbolic expansion, and symbolic here means that however little restitution is to be accomplished, the larger, the new vaster aggregate [*ensemble*] has still to *reconstitute* something" (stress in the original, Derrida: 2007, 212).

Benjamin, notes Derrida, repeatedly refers to translation as the movement of a 'tangent' that "touches the circle only in a fleeting manner" leaving its trace only at a "infinitely small point of meaning" (Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator", quoted in Derrida: 2007, 211). This 'touch' and the mark of it stands for that tiniest of meaning "that languages barely brush" (Derrida: 2007, 212). As Derrida subsequently couples this metaphor of the 'loving touch' with that of the 'amphora'

(an ancient jug, broken to pieces but retaining an unity) we get to the very crux of the Benjaminian model. Translation adds on broken fragments of a whole relentlessly, 'fragments' that "must be contiguous in the smallest details, but not identical, to one another" (Derrida: 2007, 212). As a result, at this level the dissimilarity between the 'original' and 'translations' vanish, for "just as debris becomes recognizable as fragments of the same amphora, original and translations become as fragments of a larger language" (Derrida: 2007, 212). Even the condition of 'identity in translation' is taken away, the original and translations become like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that must not resemble but instead complement each other, and all with respect to the overarching universal in the promised language. This is why for Benjamin translation is neither reception, nor representation.

4. Benjamin also uses the fruit-metaphor to point at the untranslatable. But this metaphor, curiously enough, as Derrida meticulously shows, has two layers. At the first, it is the core (*Kern*) that remains after the communicable shell (*Frucht/Schale*) is translated. The core is also called the 'untouchable' (Benjamin's term), for the work of translation is aimed at it, but it is also precisely the thing that the work would never get to: "It resists what it attracts" (Derrida: 2007, 214). At the second layer though, Benjamin introduces a crucial relationship between the 'tenor' of the text and the language of the original (the fruit and its skin, which, in Benjamin is fused with the core/shell relationship). Just like the fruit can never be completely dissociated from its skin, the tenor never gets back the same relationship it had with the language of the original. Derrida on his part, modifies this structure to go further. "The essential core, that which in the translation is not translatable again, is not the tenor", he says, "but this adherence between the tenor and the language, between the fruit and the skin" (Derrida: 2007, 215). Thus disentangled, Benjamin's metaphors are loosened up and rearranged. Now the core, the 'untouchable' becomes that which makes the two terms in the second metaphor (fruit and skin standing for tenor and language of the original) stick. This untranslatable adherence is the thing that makes the text desirable, attracts the desire to itself, and also frustrates it. The core of the original is thus product of a *difference*, it is neither the tenor nor the language, but the thing that "makes the unity" of the two, the "infinitely small"

of difference one might say, towards which every translation is oriented with a desire to touch.

5. We have a corresponding definition of 'truth' here. Truth would be that state of the "*pure language*" (stress in original, Derrida: 2007, 217) where the "meaning and the letter" would "no longer[be] dissociated" (Derrida: 2007, 217). The adherence would be perfect, the infinitely small of the 'difference' would vanish. Paradoxically then, by retaining the 'core' of the original, the 'difference' of it, deconstruction actually resists the vanishing point of truth itself. This must be underlined. For contrary to the views in circulation, deconstruction does resist the total dissolution of the *original without difference*, just as the translation is not total disjunction from the 'original'. As in the Derridian concept of 'dissemination', it is not total waste, it retains the trace of the origin.

6. In the process of translation this adherence would be lost, says Benjamin as if the translation can never really transmit the 'form', but only the content of the original. The illusive form would consist of the mechanics of desire that emits from the "adherence" between the tenor and the language. And for this reason, in the Benjaminian scheme, once translated, the translated text is incapable of containing the desire to translate itself in turn. This stress on the untranslatability of the translated text, as well as the proposition that it is only that 'content' that gets transmitted Derrida would go on to show, has a curious similarity with prevailing copyright laws, which stresses on both of these points in separating the original from translation. It is how a work "expresses" an idea that comes under the law, i.e. its 'original' form. Translation itself is copyrighted based on the 'relative originality', again, of its 'expression', it can only transmit the content *without change*. "In maintaining this distinction at all costs as the original given of every translation contract [...], Benjamin repeats the foundation of the law. In so doing he exhibits the possibility of copyright for works and author..." (Derrida: 2007, 217).

How to Translate: Economics

As a matter of fact, I don't believe that anything can ever be untranslatable or, moreover, translatable. [...] To the condition of a

certain economy that relates the translatable to the untranslatable, not as the same to the other, but as same to same or other to other. (Derrida: 2001, 178).

1. If Derrida treated translation as such in "Des tours", then it is translation in its familiar meaning, the search for 'most relevant' words to replace the source words that concerns him in "What is a 'Relevant' Translation?" But to do that Derrida starts by critically remembering the double-bind discussed in "Des tours", for only with respect to that, can one understand the economy that goes into a translation: "To understand what this economy of in-betweenness signifies, it is necessary to imagine two extreme hypotheses" (Derrida: 2001, 179). Economy in two sense, one related to the translation's desire to appropriate the meaning disseminated by the source, reclaiming the 'property' (what is 'proper' to him) and the other signifying its failure, for it cannot be full appropriation, but only of a certain quantity. And not even a 'failure', for the logic of translation itself weighs this 'relevance' always already knowing the point is to *economise*. It is an "economy of in betweenness" (Derrida: 2001, 179).

2. Scanning the history of translation (-theories) in a very swift mode, Derrida seems to side with an older 'sense-to-sense' translation as opposed to a 'word-to-word' or 'word-for-word' translation, for the latter faces a limit when put into a situation where "several words occur in one or the same acoustic or graphic form" (Derrida : 2001, 181). There it faces its ruin. But, Derrida would stop and muse in parenthesis at this point, "perhaps a translation is devoted to ruin, to that form of memory or commemoration that is called a ruin" (Derrida: 2001, 181). This is the moment when the translator loses track of his economy, and scrambles for something else in his armoury, he is compelled to make the use of an explanatory endnote, a footnote or the like, for, as Derrida reminds us, a homonym or a homophone resists word-for-word translation most obstinately (to the ruin of it). It is this confrontation of economical translation and its ruin that Derrida would try to follow in reading William Shakespeare's comedy *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-98).

3. Derrida points at the transaction that is at the very heart of the play and asks, is it possible to imagine exchange of two dissimilar things as a kind of translation, even of the (Jakobsonian) 'inter-semiotic'

kind? This knotty problem is raised in the most incidental manner, in the way of giving a seemingly obvious example: "everything in the play can be retranslated into the code of translation and as a problem of translation; [...] as, for example, between a pound of flesh and a sum of money" (Derrida: 2001, 183). And immediately we are warned that it is nothing short of "an incalculable equivalence" (Derrida: 2001, 184), between a materiality (of the flesh) and a fluid sign (money). Further, we are told, that this 'incalculability' has a parallel in the Jew's conversion to Christianity, "forced" (see Derrida: 2001, 184; clearly in this case, 'force' decided in a situation of incalculability, thus is conjured Karl Marx of *Capital* Vol. 1).

4. But the first instance (flesh and money), forced is it not, as well (in a Marxian spirit)? And if translation can be a passage from the flesh/body to the spirit/sign, from "body of literalness" to the "interiority of sense" then it might also be taken as a work of mourning, "when the letter is mourned to save the sense", assure its survival beyond the literalness of the flesh. But if we follow the spirit of Derrida's text here, we might go on to say, the body is mourned but not totally surpassed, it is retained as well, it is a process more akin to sublimation⁷. These are two different moments not related temporally to each other (not one succeeding the other), rather it is the double bind that contains both in its impossible position. Translation is the act that must retain the two, thus it is an impossible call, a call to responsibility.⁸

5. Shylock resists translation, of the literal text of the contract, i.e., flesh into money, he insists on the flesh against Portia's appeals and arguments (with this same logic, could he also have resisted his conversion at the end of the play? We are again reminded of another violence, when forced decided). His argument, reminds Derrida, centres on the 'untranslatability' of the literal body of the contract, in Shylock's book translation in this case would be sin/perjury before God. The 'double bind' is evident here as well, which Derrida calls the 'truth' of translation: the oath "passes beyond human language" (it is the law of God, like his name, untranslatable) the 'oath' "passes *through* language" (but language is not one, thus *it must be translated*, to disseminate the law (Derrida: 2001, 185).

Conclusion :

"For the moment let us retain this vocabulary of gift and debt"
(Derrida: 2007, 201).

So how to translate, how to go about, translating a text that is on my desk, on this paper, here at this moment, *really*?

Under consideration is only one word. What if one takes this word, this one piece of language in its singularity where it does not have a source to answer to. Who is the guest and who would be a host where it is difficult to decide who is who, asks Derrida. How to decide when a word answers to multiple calls to meaning, when language suffers from a fundamental homelessness? He shows how a single word can divide itself, gets broken inside, being translated within itself. Each word can now have a body of its own, laboriously gathered around a vanishing core, and thus never at rest. It translates within, suffers in the process. It might not even be material, for it is in the process of getting seasoned/tempered (like food is tempered to match the climate, the meaning of the French word for 'relevant': *relevé*, also Derrida's key-word at the title of the article), always referring back and forth, always missing its margins. It is a "translative body". But not 'in translation', for 'in translation' would freeze the sense of 'being in a process'. We can sense the argument re-turning to a moment encountered in "Des tours": translation is possible *and* impossible at the same breath. And within the site of the 'possible' (suffering evermore the pangs of the impossible), it is an economic transaction that decides the 'relevance' of a translation or even its 'goodness': "most right, appropriate, pertinent, adequate, opportune, pointed, univocal, idiomatic, and so on" (Derrida: 2001, 177). But one word, one untranslatable obstinate little block will always (both offer and) resist an opening, this opening to economics. It is also that which makes this opening possible, at least the pretence of it, and precisely there lurks the double bind. It saves and it kills. It is a prosthesis that comes early. It is an original that comes late. It is a 'gift', it would interrupt the fullness of dwelling and also the economy of translation, the smooth circulation of the optimism of it. The *gift* of translation. It tempts us to release the pulse and give in to the interruption.

NOTES :

1. For another important interpretation of the Walter Benjamin essay, see De Man, Paul. "Conclusions" Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator". *The Resistance to Theory*, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
2. Introduction to Charles Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*, trans. W. Benjamin.
3. I would say that for me the great question is always the question *who*. Call it biographical, autobiographical or existential [...] It is always the most difficult question, the irreducibility of *who* to *what*, or the place where between *who* and *what* the limit trembles, in some way" (Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 41).
4. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak translates 'aporia' as 'apāriyā' (gap that cannot be sailed across) in Bengali and puts it impeccably in her "abinirmān anubād" : "the experience of thought is [nothing but a] translation without [reaching] an-other side. Therefore [aporia/apāriyā]" (Spivak: 2007, 54).
5. See Derrida: 1998, 7.
6. This register itself can be thought in two ways, one can be Platonic and the other would roughly follow the logic of a perfection at origin and then a 'fall'.
7. In fact Derrida uses "Aufhebung, Aufheben" as an example of one untranslatable word and informs the proposed noun *relevé* and the verb *relever* in French ("to relieve" in English). Relief, to relieve ... relevant. In Hegel too, Derrida thinks, *Aufhebung* is a "translation", as "dialectical movement of interiorization, interiorizing memory" (Derrida: 2001,197). "the process of establishing relevance" (Derrida: 2001, 196). Portia's call to Shylock is then read by Derrida as a proposition of 'mercy' as sublimating 'justice'.
8. "Most of the so-called undecidable words that have interested me [...] are also, by no means accidentally, untranslatable into a single word (pharmakon, supplement, difference, hymen, and so on)" (Derrida 2001, 196).

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